

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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56th year of publication

Military chaplains restricted on faith issues

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — A controversy has been brewing in Canada's media about whether or not chaplains in Canada's armed forces are allowed to express their faith openly in their work. Licia Corbella, the editor of the *Calgary Sun*, recently accused the military of not allowing its chaplains to use the name of Jesus or the Lord's Prayer in public ceremonies. A retired military chaplain agrees that there are such restrictions, but notes that chaplains are allowed to speak openly about their faith to military personnel in private counselling and in their free time.

In a Dec. 2 column, Corbella wrote about "a July 24 memo issued by the chaplain general in Ottawa urging all its chaplains to avoid all specific references to Christianity during public services. The memo states: "During



NATIONAL DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS PHOTO

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces in uniform.

interfaith worship where a number of religious leaders are participating, chaplains may conduct

themselves in accordance with their denominational tradition."

Then it adds that in the context

of a public ceremony where various faith groups and a wide range of beliefs are likely to exist and the chaplain is the sole representative of all faith groups "the prayers should be inclusive in nature" and "sensitive in the use of specific sacred faith formulas to allow for greater inclusivity."

Corbella interpreted that memo to mean: "if the chaplain is the only religious person offering a prayer during a public service in which people other than Christians might be present, then he should refrain from using Christ's name, or the Lord's Prayer or other intensely offensive words."

Why pretend?

Corbella's reaction was: "If a Christian pastor can't pray to Christ or acknowledge his God, then why pretend that anything is going on that is even vaguely

spiritual? You may as well pray to a cabbage.... Why take part in a farce which, incidentally, forces these chaplains to deny the very person they claim to serve?"

Corbella cited the case of a Protestant chaplain who counselled a young man who felt he was being visited by an evil spirit and would wake up screaming in the middle of the night feeling as if he were being strangled. This troubled young man asked the pastor to pray for him, so he did. At the end of the prayer he used the phrase: "In the strong name of Jesus." This chaplain received a letter of commendation from his platoon commander for helping the young man in question, reported Corbella. But when the chaplain described what he had done to his superior, another chaplain, the man had the incident written up

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Jihad fighters promise 'bloody Christmas' to Christians in Central Indonesia

Alex Buchan

LONDON, December 4 (Compass) — More than 2,000 fighters from the extremist Muslim Laskar Jihad were foiled in their attempt to attack Christians of Tentena who have fled recent fighting in the Poso region of Central Sulawesi in Indonesia.

After a five-day campaign that saw the jihad force sack four villages with bulldozers and other heavy vehicles, the plan was to attack Tentena on December 1. But at 4:30 p.m. on November 30, five truckloads of army troops arrived at Tentena to provide protection, and then drove to Poso to guard other villagers.

But the danger of massacre remains high to Christians in the Tentena area, who number more than 30,000.

The conflict escalated in November in this volatile area of

central Indonesia, which has seen three years of Muslim-Christian fighting and 2,500 deaths. Laskar Jihad forces, apparently trained by Afghan and Pakistani militants, launched a major offensive on November 25, overrunning four villages in the Poso area: Patawunga, Tangkura, Sangginura and Dewua.

An urgent appeal

An urgent appeal to the Minister of Defense and Security was issued by the Synod of the Christian Church of Central Sulawesi in Tentena. The Rev. Tobondo and the Rev. Sigilipu-Saino wrote on November 29, "On behalf of the entire church membership in Poso area ... we hereby inform you that we are at this very moment being terrorized and attacked by rioters from every side." They concluded bleakly, "Please help us, sir, in a matter of hours/minutes,

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO BY WARREN JOHNSON
Christian protesters in Indonesia want government protection from Muslim attacks.

the rioters are going to enter Tentena and finish us off."

For once, Jakarta acted swiftly. Following a Cabinet meeting on the morning of November 30, the order was given to defend Tentena. By 4:30 that afternoon, the army had arrived in sufficient numbers to deter an attack.

"To some of us, this is seen as not far short of a miracle, especially if we consider the usually longer time the military and the police force respond to such situations," said a local Christian.

However, the force has not remained in Tentena, but gone on to Poso in an attempt to defend more isolated Christian villages. At midnight on December

1, jihad fighters attacked the villages of Bategencu and Sepe, situated between Poso and Tentena. According to sources, this caused a panic in Tentena 35 kilometres away. Some Christians rushed to the villagers' aid, and soldiers from Poso also arrived, sustaining five casualties.

Welcome resolve from Jakarta

Perhaps in response to the ongoing violence, Mr. Yuhhoyono, the security minister in Jakarta, announced on December 4 that a further 4,000 troops will be sent to Poso immediately and issued an order to expel anyone who does not have a valid reason to be in the area. It is thought this is a move to get rid of the Laskar Jihad force, who are not made up of local Muslims. This welcome resolve

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News

Military chaplains directed to focus on morale-building

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and the chaplain had a formal letter of complaint placed in his file.

Corbella cites this as proof that military chaplains are now also restricted in their use of faith in private counselling.

Uncharted territory

Reacting to Corbella in a recent column, Lloyd Mackey, editor and publisher of *Christian News Ottawa*, suggests "that the chastisement was not specifically for the use of the strong name of Jesus, but, more likely, for practicing exorcism." He points out that exorcism is a controversial practice and that "there are both psychological and spiritual issues involved in some of those situations."

Mackey adds: "a certain amount of common sense must come into these matters. If, for example, a Catholic chaplain should invoke Mary at an interdenominational service, or a Pentecostal cleric try to get the gathered group to speak in tongues, their superiors might raise a few eyebrows. In a



Christian News Ottawa editor and publisher Lloyd Mackey

military regimen, the leaders are cautious about surprises and that should not be considered unreasonable."

No specific references

A former military chaplain, who spoke to *Christian Courier* on the condition of anonymity,

asserted that "the chaplain's hours [i.e., worship services] are now supposed to be directed to character-building, morale-building.... Chaplains cannot any longer give any official time to proclaiming the faith." This has been the case for at least the past six or seven years, he said. For instance, "you're not supposed to end a prayer with 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Chaplains can "refer to God but don't make it specific.... You can't talk about anything dealing with salvation and the Lord Jesus.... We were urged and then told, 'Don't make any specific references.'"

Grace was scrapped

This policy reflects "an attitude on the part of bureaucracy ... that the military is multi-faith."

It is also due to pressure from atheists and people of other faiths, he suggests. He recalled hearing of one officer complaining about grace before a meal, because he was an atheist. As a result, "grace for the meal was scrapped" in that

army unit.

But he pointed out that military chaplains can, in their free time, set up private meetings with interested people to teach them about Christianity. And he argued that one-on-one counselling sessions with military personnel are usually completely confidential.

"The chaplain is the pastoral care person who doesn't have to report to anyone, except in the area of military discipline," explained the chaplain. For private counselling, "if this was a personal problem, they talked to me and it didn't go anywhere else.... The most important thing I ever did was say ... 'What you say to me in these four walls never goes anywhere else.'" This confidentiality is "mighty important" in the armed forces.

He emphasized that the Canadian armed forces "are an incredibly small family." At an army base such as Petawawa, for instance, there can be "3,000 people milling around under intense training.... The only people they can go and talk to who won't talk

to anyone else are the four or five chaplains."

'Why do we need chaplains?'

This is in contrast to non-clerical counsellors, who don't have to keep things confidential, asserted the chaplain. "Bureaucrats say, 'Why do we need chaplains?'" Why not have social workers, instead? But the chaplain argued that non-clerical counsellors "don't have the seal of a confessional.... These other people are not bringing in a spiritual background."

Military chaplaincy is intense work. "The key phrase is it is a ministry of presence," asserted the chaplain. Army personnel "know you are a servant of God, and you are there for them 24-7."

He told of one time when he was called out of bed around midnight to tell a soldier that his father had just died. "I spent till four o'clock in the morning with the guy. This happened all the time."

International terrorist connection suspected in Indonesia

... continued from page 1
from Jakarta may also be due to the efforts of international Christians pressuring the Indonesian government to prevent further carnage. But some local Christian leaders are skeptical of the government's promises of protection.

The area remains tense with Laskar Jihad forces threatening a "bloody Christmas."

"We're all pretty sure this recent escalation of violence is due to the arrival of international terrorists from Afghanistan and Pakistan, teaching the local fighters to make bombs and weapons, and bringing money to buy more sophisticated arms, but the government is just standing by watching all this instead of intercepting it," said a pastor in Poso.

Laskar Jihad — an extremist Muslim organization that has also been attacking Christians in Maluku in eastern Indonesia —

operates openly in Indonesia, its members often collecting money on street corners for "jihad." Eye-witnesses report that they even are collecting on Java island and claiming that "Christians are raping Muslim women in Poso and have declared holy war on all Muslims." The Laskar Jihad leader, Ja'far Umar Thalib, wants Indonesia to become an Islamic state — a goal not shared by the vast majority of the country's 180 million Muslims.

Christians beheaded

David Warren, a columnist for the *Ottawa Citizen* reported Dec. 5 that since Sept. 11, at least 38 Christian hamlets, villages, or towns, in Sulawesi, the Molucca Islands, and elsewhere in Indonesia, have been attacked by the Laskar Jihad, or any one of four associated Muslim paramilitaries. In each case, houses and churches were looted then burned, Christian women raped, and all those unable to flee either butchered or forcibly "converted" to Islam.

"From eyewitness reports," he writes, "I learn that the practice of the Laskar Jihad, upon capturing a village, and after destroying the buildings, is to give the Christians they have captured two choices. They may convert to Islam, or be beheaded. As witnesses have reported, they tend to arrive with a



In Indonesia, especially on the island of Ambon, hundreds of Christian men and women — including infants and pregnant women — have been forced to convert to Islam and have been circumcized under the threat of death.

collection of heads from the last village, mounted on pikes, to make their point the more persuasive. Notwithstanding, large numbers of Christians have agreed to be beheaded, given this choice."

Christians did not attack

Warren points out that the secular press, when they bother to report at all on these slaughters, describe them as "clashes between Muslims and Christians", or as

"sectarian violence." He adds: "Yet in every known encounter, the Christians had not attacked, had not formed themselves into paramilitary units, were mostly unarmed, and were outnumbered. Nor could they have been inspired by some Christian doctrine of 'jihad' against non-Christians, for there is no such thing." (See: www.davidwarrenonline.com)

Before the Laskar Jihad attacked Maluku Province last year,

the area was about 37 per cent Christian and 57 per cent Muslim, reports Religion Today. Some say the region was nearly 50 per cent Christian before President Suharto began his "transmigration" program subsidizing Muslims to move from Muslim-dominated areas to regions heavily populated by Christians.

Now the area is virtually 100 per cent Muslim because Christians have either been forced to flee for their lives, or have been forced to convert to Islam. But Christian Aid is still joining others in attempting to rescue Christians trapped by jihad troops against their will who still believe in the Lord Jesus in their hearts and want to be rescued.

Most of this terror is fanned by economic unrest and comes from outside agitators. Some of the militants captured had Afghan features, long beards (required of bin Laden followers) and could not speak Indonesian. Most Muslim residents of the area want merely to live their lives in peace with their neighbors — Muslim or otherwise.

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News/Politics

U.S. Attorney General will prosecute cases of physician-assisted suicide

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft ordered federal drug agents to take action against doctors who use controlled substances to assist in the suicides of terminally ill patients. The order overturns a 1998 directive issued by Ashcroft's predecessor, Janet Reno, which effectively suspended the federal Controlled Substances Act as it applied to Oregon by allowing the state to permit physician-assisted suicide.

Ashcroft's order was aimed squarely at Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law, passed in 1997. At least 70 people have ended their lives with the aid of a doctor since

that law took effect. All used a controlled substance, such as barbiturates.

Doctor-assisted suicide not legitimate

Ashcroft ruled that physician-assisted suicide does not qualify as a "legitimate medical purpose" — the requirement all drug uses listed under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) must meet in order to be prescribed. Ashcroft wrote, "Prescribing, dispensing, or administering federally controlled substances to assist suicide violates the CSA."

He continued, "Such conduct by a physician registered to

dispense controlled substances may 'render his registration ... inconsistent with the public interest' and therefore subject to possible suspension or revocation."

Ashcroft called for a different approach to the problem of terminal illness. "Pain management, rather than assisted suicide, has long been recognized as a legitimate medical purpose justifying physicians' dispensing of controlled substances," he wrote. "There are important medical, ethical, and legal distinctions between intentionally causing a patient's death and providing sufficient dosages of pain medication necessary to eliminate or alleviate pain."

Conservative policy groups applauded the action. Burke Balch, director of the National Right to Life Committee's Department of Medical Ethics, said, "Americans overwhelmingly agree the federal government should not be facilitating euthanasia and assisting suicide with federally controlled drugs."

Ashcroft commended

"We commend Attorney General Ashcroft and the Bush Administration for encouraging a culture that respects people for their human worth, not for their utilitarian value," added Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy for Focus on the Family. "Assisted suicide is never the answer for those suffering with terminal illnesses. Truly compassionate physicians should work towards alleviating pain and preserving life, not taking it."

But on Nov. 20, U.S. District Judge Robert E. Jones extended

for up to five months a Nov. 8 temporary restraining order that had set aside Ashcroft's directive. Oregon officials are aiming to permanently block Ashcroft's directive.

Jones said that under the extended restraining order, physicians who prescribe lethal drugs according to the state law should not fear losing their licenses.

Legal analysts and activists on both sides of the issue warn, however, that if the U.S. government prevails, the attorney general could enforce the federal law from the date of his opinion.

"There is a gray cloud cast over the law by the attorney general, and [Jones'] ruling does not remove that," said Ryan Ross, a spokesman for the Hemlock Society, a Denver-based advocate of assisted suicide. "Unfortunately, as much as it pains me to say this, if I were a physician in Oregon I would be very, very, very careful."

Russia and America become allies

History may well record that the Cold War ended, not in 1989, when the Berlin Wall was opened, but in 2001, when terrorists attacked New York and Washington. Although the Soviet Union had already begun to soften towards the west under Mikhail Gorbachev, and although the superpower tensions characterizing the period after 1945 dissipated with the breakup of the Soviet Union itself, relations between the Russian Federation and the West remained difficult throughout the 1990s.

The former Soviet Union had always relied on its buffer states in eastern Europe to shield it from possible western threats. After 1989, this safeguard disappeared. Two years later, the Russian Federation found itself further surrounded by the newly independent former Soviet republics. Worse yet, Russia was no longer a superpower and was close to being an economic disaster zone. Russians had a strong sense of being set adrift, uncertain of their role in a world changed for ever.

New Byzantine Commonwealth

Throughout the past decade, President Boris Yeltsin's foreign policy began to gravitate towards the formation of a new "Byzantine Commonwealth," to borrow Dimitri Obolensky's expression, consisting of nations sharing a common historic tradition in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, ordinary Russians almost naturally favored the Serb cause, believing implicitly in its rightness against the Croats and Bosnian Muslims. In this they were joined by the vast majority of Greeks, despite Greece's membership in the western NATO alliance and the European Union. By contrast, westerners largely favored the cause of Catholic Croatia and even of Bosnian Muslims.

In the meantime, Russia was fighting its own secessionist war in Chechnya, in the north Caucasus. Having suffered deportation under Stalin in the 1940s and returning a decade and a half later, Muslim Chechens were determined to go it alone, and most westerners were in some fashion sympathetic to their aims. Westerners were further disturbed by the brutal methods Russia was using to put down the revolt.



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Finally, in 1999 NATO went to war for the first time, launching a massive aerial bombing campaign against Serbia over its refusal to consent to an internationally-brokered political settlement in Kosovo. NATO's expansion into Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary further inflamed Russian public opinion.

Major change after Sept. 11

All of this changed after September 11. The new president, Vladimir Putin, came out unequivocally in favor of the United States in its new war on terrorism. Russians are now in effect saying, "We told you so." Three times in the last decade, the U.S. and its allies had gone to bat for Muslims: first, to defend Kuwait in 1991; second, to defend Bosnian Muslims in the middle of the decade; and finally, to defend the Kosovars two years ago. Did the Islamic world rise up to thank the U.S.? Quite the contrary. For all its efforts in their behalf, the U.S. was subsequently reviled and attacked by Islamist terrorists. Thus Russians see the U.S. finally coming over to *their* side rather than the other way around.

Although the real dynamics of the situation are more complex than this typical Russian scenario suggests, there is clearly something to it. Russians have endured the deaths of their own innocent civilians in apartment bombings in Moscow, commonly thought to have been instigated by Chechen rebels. Chechens have further been part of the Taliban in Afghanistan and active within the Al Qaeda organization.

Russia and the United States still have different interests and priorities in a variety of policy fields.

But in the global fight against terrorism they are partners for the foreseeable future.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and has long had an interest in all things Russian.

Assisted-suicide case dismissed in Britain

LONDON (Zenit.org) — Terminally-ill Diane Pretty has lost the latest stage of her court battle to be allowed to end her life, BBC reported. Five Law Lords unanimously dismissed the appeal, saying that human rights legislation was in place to protect life rather than end it.

The mother of two, who suffers from motor neurone disease, now intends to take her fight to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. Pretty, 43, is paralyzed from the neck down and has to be fed with a tube.

Much can be done to alleviate suffering

Catholic Archbishop Peter Smith, chairman of the bishops' Department of Christian Responsibility and Citizenship, said in a statement: "No one can fail to be moved by the suffering of Diane Pretty and her husband. However, with the continuing development of good quality palliative care, much can be done to alleviate such suffering and help maintain the dignity of those who are afflicted with terminal illness."

"We are duty-bound to alleviate suffering, but it is always wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings. The Law Lords have rightly upheld the longstanding prohibition against euthanasia and assisted suicide which exists, among other things, to protect the weak and vulnerable members of society."

Pretty is gradually becoming more disabled by her disease, and wants her husband Brian to be able to help her commit suicide without fear of prosecution. The Director of Public Prosecutions had refused to say it wouldn't prosecute, and Pretty challenged this.

The case had already been rejected by the High Court, and she can now appeal to the European courts if she wishes.

One of the five, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, said assisted suicide is against the law and no one has the power to suspend or abandon laws without parliamentary consent.

"No one of ordinary sensitivity would be unmoved by the frightening ordeal which faces Mrs. Pretty," he said, but he added: "Mercy killing is in law killing."

Note to Christian Courier readers:

Our next issue will be delayed one week to give us a little more time over the holidays. This will not alter the number of issues for 2002.

Editor

Editorial

‘The messenger you desire will come’ (Mal. 3:1)

Harry der Nederlanden

At the end of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, the story gives us Jacob – Israel – at the end of his life. He stands at a borderline, a threefold borderline: between life and death, between Egypt and Canaan, and at the end of one story — that of the patriarchs — and the beginning of another — that of the people of Israel. As I reflected on this scene (through the eyes of a Jewish writer, Avivah Zornberg, in *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis*), it struck me as a good position from which to survey the borderline between this year and the one coming up.

Not a religious holiday

New Years may not be a ‘religious’ holiday, and the time of year selected as the turn from one year to the next as arbitrary as our calendar, but the biblical story constantly puts us on such borderlines, prodding us to assess our own place in the story, in time. At this time of year our culture admonishes us to count our blessings and to take control of our future course by making resolutions and carrying them out. Mostly we just look back over the past year, the past decade or the past century, recall a long list of events in politics, world events, wall street, technological innovation, sports and popular culture in the pretense that simply recounting ‘what happened’ makes it add up to something.

To want events in our personal and collective lives to add up to something, to have direction and meaning is, of course, an essential part of being human. If we do it

wrong-headedly – and we are prone to do just that – it detracts from and distorts our humanity.

And God paid dearly to restore that humanity. So reflecting, remembering, recounting our own story in relation to the big story is serious stuff. In fact, it is so fraught with danger that many of our contemporaries warn us away from the attempt. Who can do so without slipping into self-centredness, without assuming a lofty and privileged viewpoint, and without forcing a personal, slanted interpretation on events that can be seen from so many different angles?

How does Jacob fare? Does Jacob look around himself contentedly, count his blessings and thank the Lord for his good fortune?

No longer nomads

As the story of the patriarchs draws to a close, the family of Abraham has at last grown into a tribe. They are no longer nomads but have acquired property and settled down. In the land of Goshen, they have become “fruitful and increased greatly in number” (Gen 47:27). The phrase recalls not just the ‘cultural mandate’ but also the promises made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob by the covenanting God.

He and his family have been saved from drought and famine in rude Canaan. He has been reunited with his favorite son, who has returned from the dead, and that son is as powerful as Pharaoh himself. His sons have been reconciled and his progeny is flourishing in the cradle of an advanced civilization. He has plenty of reason to count his blessings.

Instead, as he approaches the end, Jacob’s eyes are focused elsewhere. His desires and hopes for the future are being fulfilled in one sense but in another sense they have taken an ironic turn. Long before, Abraham had been tempted in Egypt. Egypt was a threat to the identity, the uniqueness of the chosen people.

Rather than bask in the sight of his numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren prospering in Goshen, Jacob calls Joseph to him and makes him swear that he will bury Jacob in the country that would not support them. He wants to be buried alongside Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah in a small plot of land bought long ago by Abraham. In a sense, we might say he is caught up in the past.

But although life has taken a strange turn, by this time Jacob has learned a lot about attempting to plot his life according to his own desires. His attempt to seize the blessing of the firstborn for himself led him into exile from his family and his home. His attempt to win the desire of his heart, Rachel, for his wife led to many more years of bondage to his uncle Laban. And when Jacob’s dreams and expectations fastened on Joseph, his youngest son, the joy of his life was taken away — only to be miraculously restored in his declining years. Yes, Jacob knows all about the strange and cruel turns that life can take. If he has learned anything, he has learned that he cannot draw straight lines to the future God has promised, that he cannot realize the promises by his own cleverness.

A torn man

Jacob is a torn man. Settled, fulfilled, he knows there is more to come. The end of his journey is the beginning of another. He is not just Jacob; he is Israel. When he calls his sons and the sons of Joseph to his bed to bless them, it is not to pat them on the head and tell them they are good boys. He looks into their hearts and discerns what sort of people will come forth out of them. He sees them not as individuals but as founding fathers of distinct tribes. In short, he sees them in the light of God’s

promises to make them, not part of Egyptian culture, but God’s elect nation. It is this knowledge, this faith that makes him unable to die contentedly, happily surrounded by his family, his wealth and all the signs of God’s blessing.

In the middle of this prophetic blessing, however, the memory of Rachel, the desire of his heart, overwhelms him, and he cries out in sorrow that he was forced to bury her along the road to Ephrath, and the writer adds in parenthesis: “(that is, Bethlehem)” (48:7). The entire verse is little more than a parenthesis in the story; it seems to have as little significance as the spot along the road. The words burst from Jacob in a cry of grief that has weighed upon his heart all his life. Why should the joy of his life, his beloved Rachel, be buried apart from her family in this insignificant spot?

From our perspective, however, illuminated by the New Testament, we know that Bethlehem becomes the place where the desire of the ages will be fulfilled. There the star of Jacob appears; there “The house of bread” (which is what Bethlehem means) becomes the house of living bread. Once again, for Jacob the most important prophecy occurs where he isn’t looking. There’s a curious blend of blindness and vision here at the end of his life.

We, of course, see more than Jacob. But we see it not by focusing on the events of our own time and of our own lives, but by looking at Jesus, at the Word become flesh, at the star of Jacob.

A compound of blindness and vision

Yet, in many ways our vision is just as much a compound of blindness and vision as Jacob’s. As believers who take God at his word, we are perhaps filled with greater expectations than everyone else. The Word of God pumps us full of all sorts of expectations, and Christmas reminds us of them. Jesus came as the fulfillment of the desires and longings of the ages. When we believe in him, our hearts resonate with all sorts of hopes having to do with light, fullness of life, love, joy, peace, a new heaven and a new earth. In a sense, we are turned into raving utopians.

God does not cancel out all those natural needs and wants that are ours by virtue of being human; in fact, he deepens and intensifies them. When we look back on our broken, failure-filled lives, however, especially when they become overshadowed by disease, dissolution, break-ups, intense disappointments, suffering, pain and death, our vision is darkened. Because of those glittering promises contained in the Word, our vision becomes doubly darkened at times: we experience it as abandonment and perhaps even betrayal. By God.

Who is this God who fills us with expectations and hopes, pumps us full of desire and passion for light, life, love, peace, justice, joy, fulfillment, meaning – all the things that make life good, and then allows them all to be disappointed, so that we go to our graves in the house of bondage, where even our wealth is an illusion?

But the Bible story, if it teaches us anything, must teach us that God fulfills our desires only by taking them to and through the cross. In the cross we see embodied what Jesus taught: that we gain our lives by losing them; that we come to ourselves by denying ourselves and following him. This involves, among other things, letting go of the demand that our lives add up on our terms and surrendering them the big story of the Kingdom coming in and through and among us.

This is not something we see with our own eyes but something we can confess only by taking his Word into ours. And then the star of Jacob illuminates Bethlehem.

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Letters/Opinion

A response to 'The voice of Islam'

Harry Antonides

I had to look very hard to find anything that I could agree with in Dr. Jan Boer's article in CC of November 26. The most puzzling thing was that he admonished us to realize that there could be some "positive rationale" for what the four teams of suicide hijackers did on September 11, and that those killed on that day may in the future be seen as "victims in the struggle against the monster of secularism."

I agree that Christians should oppose secularism; that they should develop a better grasp of the nature of secularism; that Muslim leaders should be more self-critical; that many Muslims are prepared to live in peace with the followers of other religions, and that "...Muslim countries are not always shining examples of democracy." The latter is a gross (if not embarrassing) understatement, but more on that below.

I want to focus on what I perceive to be the main points of Boer's article.

One. He writes that the Muslims are "waging war" against us because they believe that the West wants to destroy Islam, originally by means of colonialism and now by exporting secularism. We Christians should also be against secularism. Therefore we should be on the side of the Muslims. But there are two problems with that argument.

Benefits of modernity should not be despised

The West is not one monolithic entity that can simply be identified with the dark forces of evil. The West has historically greatly benefitted from the influence of the Christian faith, including the idea of freedom and the dignity of all persons created in the image of God. Besides, there is the reality of common grace, which lets all people in some way share in God's goodness toward his entire creation.

Freedom, prosperity, and all the benefits of modernity enjoyed in the West are not to be despised. I consider the most important benefit to be the freedom of conscience and of religion that we still enjoy today, though I am not blind to the many signs of cultural and spiritual decline. I believe that our job as Christians is not to condemn and predict the deserved destruction of our society, but to look for ways in which the light of the

Good News can be shared with all our neighbors.

A grave injustice

Furthermore, Boer is unnecessarily harsh in lumping all, or nearly all, of Christian missions (and seemingly all of Christianity), together with the secularists determined to destroy Islam. To be sure, Christians and many Christian efforts have been flawed and misguided. But to do what Boer does is a grave injustice to all who humbly and often with great sacrifice brought the Gospel to many parts of the world. In other words, I do not dispute that we need to be critical, especially self-critical, but I object to the wholesale condemnation of the Christian tradition and the West.

Two. Many Muslims want to live in peace with their neighbor. Nonetheless, the Koran, which according to Islam is the sacred revelation directly from God given to Mohammed, provides the religious justification to use force in the furtherance of Islam. That is so despite this instruction in the Koran: "No compulsion is there in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error" (2.256). There are a large number of other teachings in the Koran that command the believers to treat all infidels — that is, Christians, Jews and all other non-Muslims — as enemies, at least to be subdued and humiliated, and even killed.

To be sure, throughout its 14 centuries of existence, Islam has been marked by intensive internal debates and schisms. To simplify a complex picture, Muslims are divided between traditionalist (radicals) and moderates. The reality is that today the proponents of radicalism are vocal and dominant in many mosques also in the Western world. Just watch the infighting, the warnings, and even death threats among the Toronto Muslims. (See, e.g., the *Toronto Star* of Sunday December 2, 2001, pages A1, and A6-7. For a moderate Islamic view, see www.islamic-supremecouncil.org.)

This is the reason that so few Muslim leaders have gone public with a clear condemnation of those who perpetrated the atrocity on September 11. Most Muslim leaders failed to do that despite the fact that the suicide hijackers planned and executed their evil deed in the name of Allah and the

teachings of the Koran, with the expectation of earning a place in Paradise by their actions.

Three. Boer takes issue with the Christians in Nigeria who objected to the Muslim leadership's demand for imposing Muslim law (Sharia) on the nation. He refers to the opposing Nigerian Christians as the "lackeys of Western secularists." Considering the implications of such laws for all non-Muslims I do not blame our fellow Christians in Nigeria. Just look at all the countries where Islam is the ruling religion. Boer himself would not want to live in a Muslim country, but he implies that Christians should simply accept their endangered position under Islam, while he has the luxury of writing from the safety and security of a free and democratic country.

Freedoms destroyed by Islam

I find it ironic that Dr. Boer writes this article after we no longer have any excuse to be ignorant about what really happens in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Iran, and a dozen other states dominated by Islam. All freedoms are destroyed, beginning with the freedom of religion. Women are treated with contempt and stripped of all their rights as responsible human beings. As someone has written, they are prevented from ever feeling the sun on their face — by legislation. The very same issue of CC containing Boer's article carried no fewer than three stories of appalling cruelty to fellow Christians in Indonesia, Pakistan and Malaysia. What more proof do we need to realize that Muslim political power is inevitably tyrannical?

Problem of merging politics and one religion

Four. The main problem, namely, the merging of politics and a particular religious belief, is never even hinted at by Dr. Boer. Have we not learned from history and those

Christian thinkers who have thought deeply about the place of Christianity in society? Boer reminds us of the importance of the Kuyperian worldview, and I agree. But one of the things we can learn from that perspective is that no human institution, including the church, should ever be claiming all-inclusive power in society. If used in the sense that church and state should stick to their own domain, I agree with the statement about the separation of church and state. And that is precisely where the shoe pinches with respect to the ambition of the traditional Muslims. A religious institution that claims not only political influence but total political control over all of society violates the biblical norm that in Jesus' own words is summarized: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." To combine the power of Islamic institutions with the power of the state is a recipe for oppression and injustice. Islam is an all-too evident proof of that reality.

Islam resort to brute force

Boer claims that Islam is an anti-secular force in defence of space for religion in the public square. But by relying on rigid control over every detail of the lives of its own followers and hatred toward non-Muslims, Islam resorts to a means that is the epitome of secularism: brute force. In doing so, it is borrowing from a worldly source rather than depending on the gentle touch of kindness and love for the neighbor.

Five. The key issue in all of this is the essence of the Islam religion. The details are immensely complex, spanning at least 14 centuries of turbulent history. Most of us have a great deal to learn about this. But I agree with those who have concluded that the Islamic view of God (Allah) is one which demands absolute obedience to a detailed set of rules. Breaking the rules brings condemnation, while martyrdom in the fight

Continued on page 6...

Instinct and inevitable

There are usually two words which I encircle (or place a question mark in the margin) when I encounter them in my reading: instinct and inevitable. More often than not the word instinct in my readings has little to do with an innate feature. Historians using the word are often misusing it and fail to explain what was actually learned. Bert Hielema in a recent column (26 November 2001) mentioned the second word in his discussion of Joseph Tainter's book *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. Whenever someone uses the word inevitable, the reader should be aware that there is nothing inevitable about it. People have choices. Only afterwards something may seem to be inevitable, but even hindsight ignores the fact that other options were open. The notion is as incorrect as the commentators of hockey saying that a player had to take a penalty. Of course he did not have to; he made a choice. My suggestion to Bert Hielema is to be a little more skeptical — or possibly more careful in his writing.

Bert den Boggende,
Brooks, Alta.

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Opinion/Education

Government needs to address affordable housing, urges CPJ

Following is the text of a letter sent to The Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., M.P., Minister of Finance, written by Greg DeGroot-Maggetti on behalf of Citizens for Public Justice:

Dear Mr. Martin,

I write to you regarding the [new] federal budget. Citizens for Public Justice believes that despite September 11 it is imperative that the federal government address the urgent need for affordable housing in Canada.

CPJ recognizes that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have both imposed new security demands on the federal government and amplified the current economic slowdown. Yet, CPJ is concerned that the federal government's pre-occupation with not running a fiscal deficit, even during a recession, risks derailing the government's agenda for addressing Canada's economic, social and environmental needs.

As CPJ has stressed over the years, budget decisions must take into account the full costs and benefits of policy choices in terms of their economic, social, environmental, as well as, fiscal effects. A narrow focus on the short-run fiscal picture often results in social and environmental costs that

undermine long-term fiscal stability.

Costs of not investing

Housing is one example. Public funding for housing is expensive. Yet, in the absence of federal and provincial investments in social housing, virtually no affordable housing has been built over the past eight years. The question is whether the federal or provincial governments have really saved money by not investing in the construction of new, affordable housing.

A review of the social, health and justice related costs of homelessness, by the government of British Columbia last year, found that:

"People who do not have safe, secure, affordable shelter have more health problems than the general population, experience social problems that may be exacerbated by their lack of shelter, and are more likely to become involved in criminal activity than the general public.... Studies indicate that better access to supportive housing is cost effective and far less expensive than other alternatives such as hospital beds, shelters and jails."

The decision to not invest in housing, in effect, amounts to a

decision to spend more on health care, social services, and the justice system – not to mention the lost contributions of those without safe, secure housing to Canada's social, economic and fiscal well-being.

Fiscal benefits of investing

On the other side of the ledger, the amount of money that the government could spend on housing does not just impose an expense on public finances. Housing construction is labor intensive, generating employment and thereby reducing public expenditures for income security, while also generating tax revenue. In a series of studies on the economic impact of housing construction, Canada Mortgage

and Housing Corporation found that:

"Federal and provincial budgetary balances ... are likely to improve as a consequence of the positive impact of housing expenditures on economic activity and, thereby, on tax revenue."

Citizens for Public Justice would like to know the following:

What are the Department of Finance's estimates of the health, social and justice costs associated with having 1.15 million Canadian households living in core housing need and of tens of thousands of homeless Canadians? What are the Department of Finance's best estimates of the amount of revenue that, say, \$1 billion in annual housing expenditure would generate for

the federal and provincial governments over the next two to five years?

CPJ also seeks your response to two more questions about addressing the dual crisis of a shortage of rental housing supply and the lack of affordable rental housing:

What prevents the federal government from taking steps to invest in new, affordable housing construction through a well-funded, flexible, multi-year capital investment fund? What prevents the federal government from amending income tax legislation to encourage new private, market rental development?

Greg deGroot-Maggetti
Socio-economic Concerns
Co-ordinator, CPJ

Response to 'Voice of Islam'

... continued from page 5

For Islam results in heavenly rewards. There is neither grace nor mercy for the one who steps out of line. Salvation must be earned by our works.

Sharp contrast between Christianity and Islam

Compare that with the Gospel contained in the Bible. God comes to us in the person of Christ who has lived the life of perfect obedience, something we could never do. In addition, he took the burden of our sins and gave his life as an atonement for our sins. Salvation is by grace alone. Because God is love, he calls us to love one another, even our enemies. What a difference between these two ways of believing. (For an excellent comparison of Christianity and Islam, see Bassam M. Madany, *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim*, The Back to God Hour, 1979, 1992.)

Six. We live in tumultuous times where cultures and civilizations clash. What we need and may expect from our Christian leaders is that they help us see more clearly how we are to make our

way with integrity and courage in this time of great confusion and societal breakdown. How are we to live in peace with one another though we have fundamentally different ideas about right and wrong? What is the relationship between the church and state? What are the limits of the authority of church and state? When is war justified? Why is our way of life worth defending against those who want to destroy and kill? What should a state do about citizens who join the army of the declared enemy? What should be our immigration policies toward those who believe that it is their religious duty to seek to replace our political institutions with the rule of Islam?

There are a host of related questions facing us Christians. Helpful answers require careful reflection and sound reasoning guided by the wisdom that comes from listening to the Word of God. I regret that Boer's comments and the accompanying article by Muhammed T. Laden only succeed in muddying the waters rather than shedding light on what are now issues of great urgency.

'You wanna be a pastor someday?'

If it did not betray a profound misunderstanding of what the church is, the question may seem actually cute: "So are you thinking of being a pastor some day?" they ask me.

There is this notion that campus ministry is the weaker step-sister of the real bride of Christ, what is known as the Sunday Morning Church Building Meeting People. This is to say that to be a pastor in campus ministry (or military, hospital or prison chaplaincy, etc.) is to not quite be a "real" pastor functioning in the "real" church. Mission-focused ministry is second-rate to congregational shepherding, even though they involve similar tasks.

Brain specialist

Let me give an analogy: the family doctor is the most familiar doctor we have. He or she is a generalist and will refer you to the specialists he or she knows in whatever area you may be concerned with. If you have a brain tumor, you will want to see a neuro-psychologist. He is no less a doctor, just more narrowly focused. You would probably not, however, ask him if he is thinking of becoming a real doctor someday.

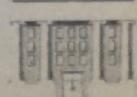
The campus minister, missionary, or chaplain is specialized in the same way. They may not receive the same increase in prestige and salary that a medical specialist does, but they are nevertheless focused on a narrower field. This often requires more education (for the campus minister, an academic degree, and for the chaplain, Clinical Pastoral Education training.)

Church work not only in churches

So, dear reader, if you are thinking of becoming a pastor some day, consider the options. To work in the Church does not necessarily mean you will work in a church. Paradigms are shifting, as the title from a recent Home Missions booklet says: "Re-Thinking Ministry: From Church-shaped Missions to a Mission-Shaped Church." The church is mission, whatever ground the Christian walks on. All of us work for healing in our world,

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



through local communities of faith.

I should say a few words about the more common pastoring role. I have rubbed shoulders with my church minister colleagues often through the last six years, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for them. It is a real challenge to face expectations of quality preaching, counseling, administrating, and teaching. I remember one fellow who was so heart-broken by congregational wrangling he wanted out of the profession. Another whispered to me of six couples in his church on the brink of separation or worse. Yet another is on anti-depressants in order to help him cope with the pressure. I marvel at the spirit they show through years of often unappreciated work (see Matt. 10 for Jesus' warnings about ministry).

Now I know they are not all angels. But they do work more than one day a week, and if there is a glory to the position, it comes through decades of faithful service. You can see it in the eyes of retired ministers, if you look really close. Most of these weathered servants have small pensions, but great stories full of tragedy, intense fighting and, thankfully, hilarious humanness.

Did you know that it takes 12 hours to write the average sermon? Reformed churches make the poor guy prepare two a week. Maybe this New Year you could send a note of thanks to your pastor. Or if it's easier, send one to the last one who pulled through town. People seem to find much more to appreciate after they are gone.

Who knows. Maybe if we treat and talk about our church pastors with grace and gratitude, young people will notice, and the seminary will be flooded with eager young visionaries. For all the work the Spirit is calling us to do in his world.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Arts/Media

Fall network television: treading lightly?

Ron Vandenburg

Executives at the major American networks aren't quite sure what this New America is ready to watch. After a long, difficult week of network news coverage on the September 11 disaster, TV executives weren't sure what to put on. They knew that the news coverage was necessary, but they were also very much aware that television is a business, and for the business to succeed, commercial revenues were needed.

High hopes for fall

By the following Saturday, CBS network executives carefully tried out the viewers with *Touched by an Angel*. I am sure that even that program was carefully screened for any remote reference to what had happened. The segue from the news to the show was neatly buffered by two angel cast members giving condolences to those in pain.

Network television had some high hopes for this fall, but some returning shows and some new ones posed problems in this ultra-sensitive climate.

In a previous *CC* article, I wondered what *The West Wing* writers would do. Would they rewrite the scripts and have the fictional Democratic president deal with the global threat that his real life Republican counterpart was facing? Second guessing President Bush, however, might alienate a large portion of viewers. Creative talent Aaron Sorkin decided to keep the original storyline going, but to insert a teaching episode entitled, "Isaac and Ishmael".

'Isaac and Ishmael'

In "Isaac and Ishmael", the White House encounters a security alert, and all personnel and visitors are asked to remain in the building. Josh Lyman and his secretary Donna Moss are detained with a room of high school scholars who begin to interview Lyman on the topic of terrorism. But instead of the "walk and talk"—CNN-hyper-text conversations that viewers have come to see as the basis of the show—writer Sorkin becomes a lecturer on the topic of terrorism and the Islamic faith. As all the characters join the discussion, the acting becomes secondary to the sermon in which the scriptwriter's voice dominates.

Television is better when it uses its stories to lead, and fortunately part of that episode also shows an interrogation between the Chief of Staff and an Arab-American office worker at the White House. After being detained, the Arab-American is grilled about his

family and his past. The characters, plot, and conflict tell a clearer story, and the idea behind it becomes more powerful and memorable.

Another NBC show had a bigger problem. *Third Watch* is a show about Emergency

Medical Service workers (EMS), firefighters and police officers working in New York City. The writers work with the real problems of these men and women. The show's cast and crew themselves had been hit hard by the tragedy because some of the technical advisors for the show, firefighters and police officers, had been killed. One actor is married to a firefighter who had been at ground zero and survived.

So *Third Watch* presented first a narrative of the September 11 events as told by the emergency workers themselves. For two hours, person after person told what happened to them and how their own lives changed forever. Very powerful television. In the next weeks, they showed two episodes, one the day before the 9-11 and one a week after. The writers were courageous in taking on the subject from these characters' perspective so soon. The "week after" episode was difficult to watch because of all the pain portrayed.

I have never seen a show with so much silence, not just no one talking with music in the background, but real silence.

It will be interesting to see how real these characters remain and how long the writers will continue this very difficult storyline. Regardless of what storylines they do take up in the future, the main story thread from now on will be the September 11 events and how these characters deal with that pain. It has to be the story, because that pain will be the focal point for the real EMS, firefighters and police officers. The question is: will viewers want a weekly reminder of that pain?

Spy/espionage shows air

All the spy/espionage shows that the network had planned have finally aired. *Alias* followed more in the footsteps of *Dark Angel* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, with a young beautiful Alpha female kicking and punching her way through the bad guys. This time,



The cast of *Third Watch*: mirroring real life near Ground Zero.

however, the bad guys weren't fictional demons but an international array of government agents. Fortunately for the show, the bad guys weren't of Arab descent; instead, America had its own evil spy network for the CIA to fight against.

The next spy show to premiere was *The Agency*, a show intended to show the inner workings of the CIA. At first, CBS was hesitant to show it, let alone promote it. After deleting an initial reference to Osama Bin Laden in the first episode, *The Agency* was promoted wrapped in the American flag and projecting its agents as heroes. Recently an episode on bio-terrorism was advertised as the show that "every American needs to see".

Difficult show delayed

The most difficult to broadcast was a new show that premiered in mid-November called *24*. The difficulty was that in the pilot episode a plane is destroyed by a terrorist. This is a quick way for the writers to tell us that this character is ruthless, but it would have been difficult for a viewer not to remember the events of 9-11. Fortunately the destruction of the plane occurred off-camera and the viewer only saw the parachutist on her way to safety. Another difficulty was that the good guys are an anti-terrorist team trying to prevent an assassination of a promising African-American senator on his way to a presidential primary.

But this show has the most promise to hold viewers and give an exciting, interesting and maybe truthful picture of the way agents fight against threats made against their citizens and their country. The premise is that the entire show is presented in real time and so the 24 episodes will add up to a single day.

The death of reality TV?

Another interesting recent development is the death of Reality TV proclaimed by many TV critics.

Mole 2: The Betrayal aired two episodes before being canceled. We will never know who won that half a million dollars.

ABC has pulled the plug on *The Runner*, an eagerly anticipated reality show produced by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon. The network said it was worried about how the series, in which people try to hunt down a "runner" as he travels across the country, would be received after the terrorist attack. ABC also cited the public's lack of interest in the reality genre since the attacks.

Without any reality television of its own now, ABC pointed to the disappointing response that both CBS shows, *The Amazing Race* and big granddaddy *Survivor Africa* have received.

The Amazing Race's problem is less the climate than the premise of racing around the world. The producers believe that we would rather listen to the participants bickering instead of viewing the amazing world that we live in.

As for *Survivor Africa*, the problem here may be the setting. Although Africa is beautiful, the audience can only tolerate so much

of the characters telling them that water is a vital part of survival.

However, sounding the death knell for reality television is premature. *Temptation Island 2* premiered strongly and taping has already begun for *The Amazing Race 2* and *Survivor 4: Back to the Beach*. I don't see an end to the backstabbing yet.

Time to laugh?

Finally, is it a time to laugh? Evidently not. New situation comedies continue to limp along, while the old remnants of NBC's must-see TV recycle old storylines. Interestingly enough, the head honcho of CBS announced that his network was working on a pilot for a new sitcom. The story is a comedy about a young widow and a young widower — both of the September 11 attacks. The show won't focus on the past but show how they come together and rebuild their lives. I'm not optimistic about this one.



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Church

Christmas season tense for Pakistan's Christians

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — Five weeks after Islamic extremists gunned down 15 Pakistani Christians in a Sunday morning worship service, church leaders across Pakistan admitted that their congregations remain "tense and

fearful" as Christmas approached.

"My people are a bit afraid," Bishop John Victor Mall of the Church of Pakistan told Compass by telephone from Multan. "I would not say they have lost their faith, but they have definitely lost their confidence."

Bishop Mall said many Christians were uneasy about attending traditional Advent programs this year in his diocese, which includes the Bahawalpur congregation attacked on October 28. Normally widely attended, the Christmas celebrations are often held in the evenings after dark, he noted.

Christians afraid to attend services

The Protestant bishop said he met last week with Multan's deputy inspector general (DIG) of police, who promised stepped-up security arrangements for all the local churches' Christmas programs this year. "But the DIG cannot put many policemen everywhere," the bishop said, "so some Christians will be afraid to come."

Threats of a "Christmas bloodbath" against Christians have proliferated in Pakistan since late October, when the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization demanded the death of two Christians in retaliation for every Muslim killed in the U.S. military strikes in Afghanistan. Christians compose less than three percent of the national population.

"It's the unpredictability of it all," a bishop from the Punjab commented. "Anytime it can happen, anywhere," agreed a Christian

layman in Karachi. "Yesterday it was Bahawalpur; tomorrow it can be Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, or anywhere."

Within a week of the Bahawalpur killings, Pakistan police authorities reported that about 120 suspects from hard-line Islamist groups had been rounded up. But so far only one man, who was accused of sending faxes on behalf of the Lashkar-e-Umar militants claiming responsibility for the massacre, has been identified by police investigators. "We have heard that four suspects remain under arrest for possible involvement in the crime," a Lahore source reported, "but so far none have been named or charged publicly."

Terrorism will not be tolerated

Nevertheless, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's initial handling of the Bahawalpur massacre "left no doubt of government sincerity" in declaring such acts of terrorism will not be tolerated, one bishop said. Police authorities promptly beefed up security around the nation's churches, he noted.

Only nine days after the Bahawalpur massacre, another member of the city's Christian community was shot and killed at his job by suspected Islamist mili-

tants. Two days later, another Catholic Christian was shot to death in Peshawar, capital of the North-West Frontier Province near the Afghan border.

In Bahawalpur, the main sanctuary of St. Dominic's Catholic Church where the massacre took place was re-consecrated in a solemn November 15 mass led by Catholic Bishop of Multan Andrew Francis. Now back in use by both the local Catholic community and the small Protestant congregation, the prayer hall has been scrubbed of the bloodstains, fresh jute mats placed on the floor and shattered windows repaired. But the pockmarks of 142 bullets still deface its walls and altar.

All five of the Christians seriously wounded in the attack are "improving slowly," Bishop Francis said, and two of them are still hospitalized.

Bishop Mall confirmed that the Pakistani government had fulfilled its pledge to pay compensation of one lakh rupees (over \$1,600) to the families of the 15 Christians and one Muslim guard killed in the attack. "It's not so much," he said, "but they kept their promise."

"It has been a very long month here, after this very, very sad incident," Bishop Mall sighed. "And it is a tense time, this first Christmas afterwards. Please pray for us."

Interfaith worship violates Christian belief, says NAE

(Religion Today) — According to an Associated Press report in the *Washington Times*, the proliferation of interfaith services that have sprung up since Sept. 11 disturb some conservative Protestants.

"We embrace tolerance in the right sense, which is religious freedom for all, without bigotry, while rejecting a misguided, misunderstood tolerance which sees all religious beliefs as equally valid," said the Rev. Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

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Church

Cloning of human embryos prompts questioning by churches

Cedric Pulford in London and Chris Herlinger in New York

(ENI) — A leading British bioethicist, Dr. Donald Bruce, has called for a global treaty to ban human reproductive cloning following the announcement that a U.S. company has produced cloned human embryos.

The announcement, by Advanced Cell Technology (ACT) of Worcester, Mass., prompted criticism from a number of church leaders and condemnation by U.S. President George Bush who described the cloning as "morally wrong" and "bad public policy".

The company said Nov. 25 that

its research was aimed at making replacement cells for medical conditions including diabetes, cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and that it was not trying to produce a cloned human being. It also claimed the embryos — which were later destroyed — were "cellular life, not human life."

Bruce, who heads the Church of Scotland's Society, Religion and Technology project, said the church supported the limited use of human embryos for therapeutic purposes, but absolutely rejected human reproductive cloning.

He wrote that cloning embryos meant the destruction of human lives, which was intrinsically immoral: "The embryo and the human adult are the same organism at different stages of growth and maturity."

Cloning embryos, Murphy-O'Connor argued, was also unnecessary because of the alternative of adult stem cells. This area of science "is advancing with astonishing speed."

British law rushed in

The ACT announcement coincided with a law being rushed through the British parliament to ban the implantation into women of cloned human embryos. The measure was in response to fears that Britain might be the target of scientists racing to be the first to produce a cloned human, after the High Court ruled that human cloning was not illegal in the country.

Cloning, or nuclear transfer, replaces the nucleus of an egg with a donor cell. The technique produces unspecialised "stem cells", with the aim of growing replacement body parts having the same DNA as the patient.

Bruce told ENI: "The public's fears of where reproductive cloning might go are exaggerated, but it's right to say we shouldn't do it."

He suggested that the cloning of human beings would remain ethically unacceptable because it would involve killing the unsuccessful results of scientists' experiments.

Asked whether the line could be held between therapeutic and reproductive cloning, Bruce said: "Ethics change, and some issues are like heart transplants, which most people now find acceptable. Other issues stick and don't go away. I think reproductive cloning will be one of those issues."

Britain's two biggest churches, the (Anglican) Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, in reactions obtained by ENI, had divergent views about the cloning news from the United States.

Church of England spokesman Arun Kataria said the American experiments seemed to be in line with approaches that the church supported, at least as an interim measure. The experiments had a therapeutic intention, and did not appear to be a move towards reproductive cloning.

The church wanted more research into adult stem cells, where stem cells are produced without the use of embryos. Developments in cloning embryos must not stifle research in this area, Kataria said.

A Catholic spokeswoman said her church's view was contained in an article by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper.

Outright ban on cloning

In the United States, the United Methodist Board of Church and Society joined the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the conservative Christian Coalition, among other groups, at a Capitol Hill press conference on Nov. 26 in calling for an outright ban on human cloning.

Jaydee R. Hanson, a staff executive of the Methodist board, told the press conference that in 2000 the denomination had called for a "complete and total ban" on the type of experiments being conducted by the New England firm — banning not only the cloning of human embryos, but also "therapeutic, medical, research and commercial procedures which generate waste embryos."

The US House of Representatives has already passed legislation banning human cloning, but the U.S. Senate has yet to act on it.

Richard Land, who chairs the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the country's biggest Protestant denomination, called such research "unconscionable".

"As Americans we must now decide whether we are going to be a country that allows the destruction of our tiniest humans for the supposed benefit of older and bigger humans," Land said in a statement. "Unless the answer is a resounding 'no', barbarous consequences will follow this downward spiral into a new biotech dark age."

Some scientists not involved in the research suggested that since the experiments only went to the stage of developing four to six cells that survived for only a few hours, the actual scientific advance was minimal.

Glenn McGee, a bioethicist who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania, described ACT's announcement as "nothing but hype". Quoted by the Associated Press, McGee said it was still not known what cells the researchers had grown from a cloned embryo. "They are doing science by press release," he said.

Does your church really need a bigger building?

Rick Warren

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (BP)—At Saddleback, we're beginning to use the Internet as a tool to develop, grow and sustain our congregation. Of course, the Internet will never replace face-to-face fellowship, but it is a serious mistake to think that everything the church does — worship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism and fellowship — must be done within the four walls of a church building. In fact, I'm convinced that church buildings are a major barrier to exponential growth and that massive building programs are often a waste of money.

God blesses people, not buildings

Currently there are several dozen extremely large church buildings being planned and built in America, but I believe they are the last of the dinosaurs. History has proven over and over that future generations never fill the cavernous temples of previous generations. For instance, every time Spurgeon's Tabernacle was rebuilt (three times) it was downsized. The list of empty great cathedrals would be quite long. God wants to do something new in each generation. He blesses anointed people, not buildings.

We also need to remember that the period of fastest growth for Christianity was during the first 300 years — when there were no church buildings at all. And today all of the rapidly exploding church-planting movements around the world are multiplying without having physical church buildings.

Buildings should be tools for ministry, not monuments. I've said repeatedly to our congregation that Saddleback will never build a building that could not be torn down if it prevented us from reaching more people. Churches should focus on building people, not building buildings! That's what being purpose-driven is all about. It's a people-building process. Build your people before your steeple.

Our resistance to building buildings has been one of Saddleback's values since its inception 21 years ago. One of the goals we set at Saddleback was to prove that you don't need to build a building in order to grow a church. That's why we waited until after our congregation was averaging more than 10,000 in attendance before we built our first building! I think we proved our point. Just because you are growing does not mean you should build a new or larger building.

Let me give you an example: Recently, we launched our annual fall spiritual growth campaign called "50 Days of Love." One of the five components is an eight-week small group Bible study that augments my sermons. Because all of our adult education (i.e., "Sunday school") takes

place in homes — not buildings on our campus — we were able to start more than 200 new groups in one week.

You read that correctly. We enlisted and connected over 2,000 new people (who were not in any of our existing groups) into new Bible study groups in a single weekend. We would have never even considered numbers like that if we were trying to place them all on our campus.

I am absolutely opposed to building any size of facility that will only be used once or twice a week. It is poor stewardship of God's money to build a facility just because the pastor wants to speak to everyone at one time.

In fact, here's a little secret: Only pastors like really huge church services!

Normal people prefer more moderate-sized services, large enough to make the singing great, but not an overwhelming crowd. That's why I'd rather have a building of 200 and fill it with five services than have a 1,000-seat auditorium that is filled only once a week and then left empty the rest of the week.

Yes, Saddleback has a 3,200-seat worship centre, but we fill seven identical weekend services and thus are able to minister to more than 17,500 attenders weekly without the expense of a giant stadium-style arena.

Consider a multi-purpose facility

If you must build, I urge you to at least consider making it a multi-purpose facility. That is much better stewardship of resources. At Saddleback, as soon as our weekend services are over, the seating arrangement in our worship centre is taken down and the building is used in a variety of ways every day of the week. This releases an enormous amount of space for programs and money for missions.

I can already hear the critics of this suggestion making a good point for "the grandeur and beauty of worship architecture." Of course, I believe in architectural beauty as an aid to worship too. But at what cost? Can anyone seriously give a New Testament justification for billions of dollars spent on debt for sanctuaries that are used for only a couple hours a week — especially when so many around the world have yet to hear the Good News?

I encourage you to experiment and look for ways to reach and grow people faster and cheaper, without buildings. Don't let traditional methodology, or brick and mortar, or the lack of it, keep you from focusing on what matters most — changed lives!

Rick Warren is the author of The Purpose-driven Church and offers stewardship materials, "Time to Build," at his website www.pastors.com.

Christmas/Agriculture

Building connections at Christmas

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

After we open Christmas presents at our house, I sneak into the kitchen and grab a bag of Dutch "pepernoten", small hard ginger cookies. I fling them all over the living room. My five kids, including teenagers, scramble to find them!

Christmas traditions. Whether we create new ones, carry on old ones, or share those of others, customs we value bind us to others and to God as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

In Mali, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee missionary Henrietta Hunse attended a combined bilingual worship service on Christmas morning. "The place was packed," she says. Two choirs sang, French and Bambara, and their Spirit-filled enthusiasm brought the place to life. At the end of one service the joyful Bambara choir sang as people left. The French singers joined them. Then the Bambara choir started quasi-dancing down the aisle, and the French choir merged with them. Up and down, back and forth, they threaded their way around the church. People who had left the sanctuary returned, drawn by the jubilant choir.

Henrietta also attended an outdoors English service that focused on reaching expatriates who usually didn't attend church. She recalls, "It took years for me to get used to being hot and having to put on mosquito repellent."

Making traditional foods draws people together. As a child in Windsor, Ontario, Linda Warkentin helped peel two 50-pound bags of P.E.I. potatoes on Christmas Eve day. As they worked, the family listened to Christmas carols.

"My parents, originally from

New Brunswick, maintained a tradition passed down through generations," Linda explains. "They made and ate poutines exclusive to French Canadians from the Maritimes." Unlike the version from Quebec, french fries with cheese and gravy, these are a mixture of mashed and grated potatoes formed into balls with a bit of salt pork and the occasional wax paper-wrapped coin in the centre.

After midnight mass, the family enjoyed poutines before bedtime. On Christmas day, after opening presents, they ate them for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Linda says, "Though one usually satisfied our hunger, we often had seconds in the hope of getting a coin."

Though Linda's husband doesn't share her enthusiasm for the poutine tradition, her three daughters do.

Gift-giving is a Christmas tradition that most people observe, but Elly and Bram Hoff have added a new dimension to it. Elly says, "When our seven children were young, their arguing sometimes upset us. We decided to do something about it. At the end of November we drew names of family members, but didn't share the information. In December we did nice things for the person. So, in order to keep the secret we had to do nice things for everyone!"

On Christmas Eve, after a fondue, each one gives a present to his or her designated person, along with a personal poem. Elly says, "The poems are lots of fun to write and receive!"

Rod and Sherry Gauthier have developed a meaningful timetable for celebrating. On Oct. 31, they begin playing Christ-honoring Christmas music. In early November their children, Matt, Davey, and Hannah, each pick up a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child at their church. Later, the

family buys items and packs the boxes intended for needy children. Sherry says her children find it difficult sometimes, "especially if they bought a toy they really like. But it has helped them understand how little other children have."

December 5 is Matt's birthday, so the family begins Christmas decorating afterward. Rod says, "We've tried to let him enjoy his own special day." At the Christmas tree's base, they place a small rubber Nativity set for the

children. Sherry remarks, "We've heard many humorous versions of the Christmas story. We want the real meaning of Christmas to be foremost in their minds."

December 25 is Matt's birthday, so the family begins Christmas decorating afterward. Rod says, "We've tried to let him enjoy his own special day." At the Christmas tree's base, they place a small rubber Nativity set for the

"Happy Birthday, Jesus." Davey or Hannah hand out presents from a cradle which Matt's grandfather made for him.

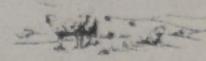
Rod says, "Through the entire day we try to keep our Savior's birth in mind as the central reason for our celebration."

Christians around the world, observing their traditions and establishing new ones, echo Rod's sentiments.

Snowscape

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



Winter's snow blanket silently drops, covering over a "multitude of evil": yard litter out of sight and out of mind, niggling jobs locked in until Spring brightening dull landscape: disguising Fall's brown grass, redecorating leafless trees.

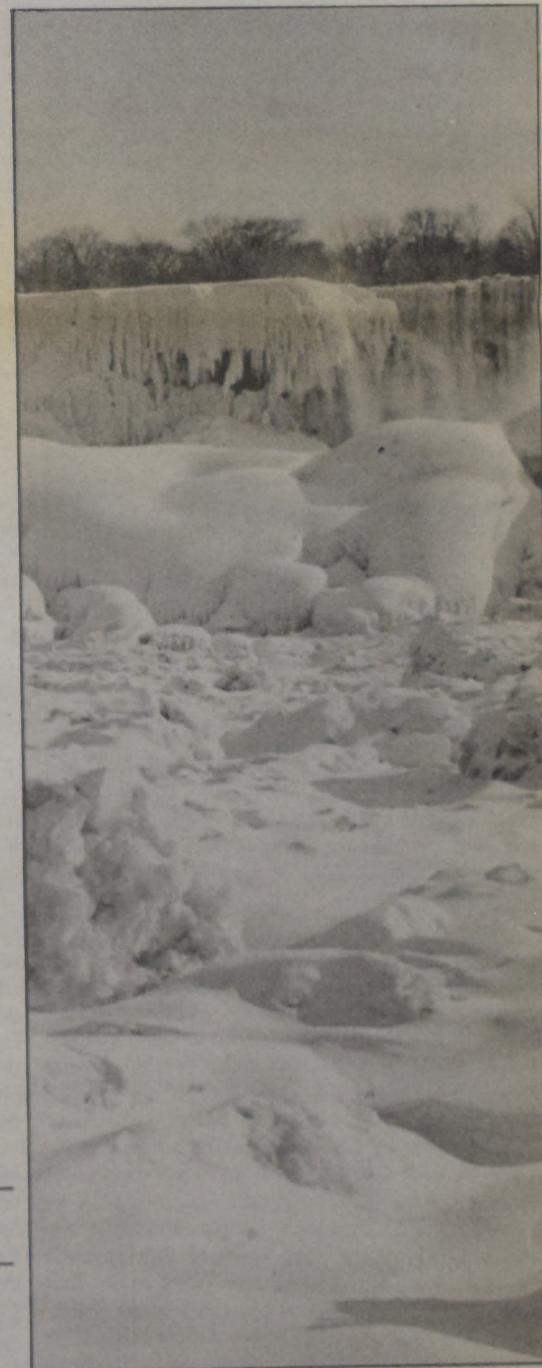
eliciting a sigh of relief: feet up by comforting fire, renewing acquaintances, savoring an extra cup of coffee,

and contemplating snow: myriad geometric patterns, pristine white, reflecting moonlight, insulating tender roots, slipping slopes for sliders, storing water for Spring.

But it is tough slogging through snow, plowing aside impeding accumulation. Wind-whipped drifts bury man and beast. Quick Spring thaws flood and drown dreams.

Microcosm of creation and curse: intricate beautiful, pristine, but choking, frustrating, deadly. Since the first wrong move in creation, beauty hides danger, gift turns ugly.

But, as far as the curse is found, divine grace and mercy reach. Metaphor message to the soul: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." A penitential forgiveness blanket covering sin and guilt. Ultimate rest.



Vern Gleddie has a snowy sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.



Food..? For Thought..??

Regardless of how many pieces are left on a chessboard, if the king is gone, it is game over.

Likewise, if no heart-to-heart, totally open communion exists with God and at least one or more fellow human beings, there is no game, just moral failure.

Self-discovery of
Imprisoned Persons

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NIAGARA FALLS PHOTO BY EBERHARD E. OTTO

Christmas

Sugar beet pancakes for Christmas

Berta Hosmar

We are blessed with eight grandchildren, ranging in age from 4 to 13, who consider it a special treat to come for a sleep-over. Experience has taught us not to invite more than two at a time. We enjoy those sleep-overs almost as much as they do, and we always try to do something special with them, like taking them bowling or miniature golfing. They also expect us to take them to McDonalds for supper, and always, yes always, they demand pancakes for breakfast.

As they grew older, they were delighted to hear about the tricks their parents played on us when they were young.

This has a reason: a story I told them planted that idea into their heads. So I have only myself to blame when I find myself baking pancakes in the kitchen early Sunday morning before church. I would not have dreamed of going to that trouble for my own children some 25 years ago.

Just recently our 13-year old grandson Jesse slept over with a friend, and for a change he now requested pancakes for a bedtime snack. I told myself that I was crazy, but of course I indulged him and at 11 o'clock at night I presented them with a stack of pancakes that could have fed a family of four.

"You're lucky Oma, I could have brought my other friend and he eats twice as much as Adam here," Jesse told me cheerfully while licking the last crumbs and the syrup off his plate.

We've discovered that, compared to their parents, kids nowadays have slightly different ways of amusing themselves in their spare time. Computer and Nintendo games were unheard of when our kids grew up, but one thing hasn't changed: kids still like to listen to stories, so bedtime story-telling has also become a ritual in our home when the grandkids sleep over.

When they were small, they always wanted us to tell them stories about the adventures of dogs or cats or hamsters. As they grew older, they were delighted to hear about the tricks their parents played on us when they were young. Over and over again we



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

had to tell them how one of our sons at the age of five was playing at a friend's house and how they poured water into the vacuum cleaner just to see what would happen when mom plugged it in. The mom nearly got electrocuted.

"Yep, that's my dad for you!" exclaimed one grandson admiringly. Another one of our sons, also at a young age, collected dead flies and some paper, and hiding under his bed, built an altar for the Lord, as he later explained. We had just read about burnt offerings in the children's Bible. The trouble was he also found matches and almost put the house on fire.

"Awesome," breathed another grandson, and we briefly wondered if we had put ideas into their heads.

They also loved the story about our daughter, who occasionally threw severe temper tantrums when she was four years old. The best way to calm her was to pick her up kicking and screaming and plunk her on her bedroom floor, locking the door behind her. It always worked. After a while she would settle down, and we always assumed that she was quietly playing with her toys.

Not so. Later we found out that sometimes she had opened her window and called her brother and

his friend, who were usually playing around the house. They cheerfully offered her their backs so she could climb to freedom. After playing outside a while, they would reverse the process.

Mom and Dad had vaguely wondered why she seemed so happy after her punishment.

"I should try that some time," vowed one of her sons.

Next the grandchildren graduated to war stories, from our childhood in Holland during World War II. My husband would explain about tanks and rockets and bombs, and although, sadly enough, today they only have to turn on the news on T.V. to see for themselves, they still always wanted to hear about our experiences. I, in turn, would tell them about the scarcity of food, the empty stores, the 8 p.m. curfew and the fears we lived with each and every day.

One story I was asked to tell them over and over again was the pancake story. It happened during the month of December, 1944. Although it would soon be Christmas, it was not a joyful season. People had very little food, there was hardly any fuel to keep us warm, and the hydro was on only for a few hours a day. Many buildings and houses in our town had

been destroyed by bombs, and we dove for cover every time we heard planes flying low.

In spite of all this, we were told by our parents and teachers that we could still celebrate God's great gift to this world — the birth of His Son. We had decorated our house with holly and pine boughs and red ribbons, and on the Sunday before Christmas my mother promised us pancakes for supper.

That was a real treat, for we lived on greenish, foul-smelling bread, potatoes, root vegetables, rye porridge and the occasional apple. And we still considered ourselves blessed that we had food, for many people in the cities were starving.

Like many people, we had grown

sugar beets in our backyard. After cooking them and stirring them for hours, you ended up with a sweet syrup. For the pancakes my mother had saved some flour and she had a little oil and milk and even some eggs. That, plus the syrup and the little bit of brown sugar my mother had also saved, made a meal fit for a king. We sniffed and smelled the delicious cooking aroma as the stack of pancakes grew taller. Then a loud knocking on the door threatened to spoil our meal. When my dad fearfully opened the door, we saw a pathetic-looking young couple, the mother carrying a small boy.

"Come in, it's warm here," said dad.

Soon we were sharing our precious pancakes with three strangers. They ate a lot. We had some unholy thoughts about maybe not having quite enough pancakes for ourselves, for, although impressed by the couple's story, we were a bit too young to feel true compassion for their plight.

The family had come from a city where food was so scarce that they had decided to make the dangerous trip to an uncle who lived on a farm some 100 km away. That uncle, they were sure, would feed them till the war was

over.

They had only one bike, and they had traveled with the little boy sitting in front of his dad on the seat, while mom sat on the carrier. But when they had stopped to buy some food on the way their bike had been stolen. Weak as they were, they had to walk. We put them up for the night, and the next morning my dad took them to their destination with his horse and wagon.

"You know," I told the kids, trying to teach them some valuable lesson from the Bible, "actually your great-grandparents, by helping that family, obeyed the teachings of Jesus. You know that Jesus told us all, 'If you help one of the least of my children, you have helped me.' With a little imagination you could pretend that this needy family could have been Joseph and Mary and Jesus, fleeing to Egypt when the wicked king Herod tried to kill Jesus."

I hoped that this story would have an impact on them, and it did, but only for a little while. One grandson asked thoughtfully, "But how would you know that you did it for one of Jesus' brothers or sisters? Maybe they weren't even Christians."

"How can you be so dumb?" the other sneered. "Don't you know that you have to be good to heathens too and that you have to love your enemies?"

Then one of them changed the subject. "Those pancakes your mother made, were those the thin, Dutch pancakes we once had at a school bazaar? They were yummy!!"

"Would you make those for us some time?" asked the other, licking his lips.

I told them that by adding some butter and extra milk to the batter, and by using oil, you would get the crispy pancakes, that almost looked and tasted like crepes. That sealed my pancake fate. All of a sudden they decided that their bedtime snack had still left them really, really hungry, and that they absolutely had to have some of those pancakes right away.

I've been baking pancakes for the grandchildren ever since. But I'm also hoping to create memories, and if, later in life, they remember me by connecting me with pancakes, so be it.

Berta Hosmar lives in Whitby, Ont.

Derailed and desperate: Campus ministry in exile

Dr. Brian J. Walsh, CRC Campus Minister, University of Toronto

On November 25, 2001, Mr. Shiao Chong was commissioned as the first full time Christian Reformed campus minister to York University. I was honored to preach at that service and my sermon took the shape of free form verse inspired by the prophet Isaiah (specifically chapter 40). But I also employed the wisdom and words of other prophets more contemporary. Not surprisingly, we begin with Bruce Cockburn

*Derailed and desperate
how did I get here?
Hanging from this high wire
by the tatters of my faith
Sometimes a wind comes out of nowhere and
knocks you off your feet and look — see my tears —
they fill the whole night sky
the whole night sky*

(Bruce Cockburn, "The Whole Night Sky,"
Charity of Night, 1996)

*Derailed and desperate
that is Israel in exile
hanging from a high wire
by the tatters of a vanquished and defeated faith
no wonder their tears filled the whole night sky
no wonder theirs was an infinite sadness
no wonder their tears were their only food day and night
for there was no one to comfort Israel*

*The centre did not hold
the centre of the universe
the royal city of David,
the city of the Great King
demolished with the mere flick of the imperial wrist
the glory departed
the temple destroyed
the land desecrated
all dreams vanquished*

*it is all gone
all sense of identity
all aspirations for the future
any sense of a place in God's world
it is all gone
just painful memories of a better time*

*the hopes and prays
the better days
the far aways
forget it*

*it didn't turn out the way you wanted it to
it didn't turn out the way you wanted it to, did it
it didn't turn out the way you wanted it to
it didn't turn out the way you wanted it to, did it*

*now you know
this is what it feels like
now you know
this is what it feels like
(Nine Inch Nails, "The Wretched,"
The Fragile nothing Halo Fourteen)*

*The centre did not hold
the centre of the universe
the economic and military nerve centre
of the global economy
shaken to its foundations
with the mere flick of a terrorist's wrist
brandishing a box cutter*



TORONTO PHOTO E. BIEDOWSKI, CANAPRESS (LEFT); JERUSALEM PHOTO BY ANN ZANE SHANICS (RIGHT)

*Nothing has quite turned out the way we wanted it to
not in New York
not in Washington
not in Kabul
not at York University
betrayed desires
broken hearts
the hopes and prays
for better days?
forget it*

*But then a voice is heard
"Comfort, O Comfort my people"
a word "is spoken against the prevailing gales"
"in a world of cruelty and murder
such a word barely gains a hearing
it is scarcely audible,
rarely attended to in the absurd
cacophony of competing claims,
the culture of noise, inadvertence and destruction"
(Daniel Berrigan)*

*yet a voice is heard
against all odds
against all the evidence
a voice is heard
"Comfort, O Comfort my people"
it is a voice from the heavenly court
a voice from "the nerve centre of the universe"
(Paul Hanson)*

*speaking when the constructed centre of Jerusalem
or New York has not held
and it says "enough"
enough sentence!
enough dislocation!
enough tears!
enough betrayal!
enough violence!
enough grief!
enough exile!*

*But can exile end?
can a new thing happen in a world of one
damn thing after another?
can the abandoned be loved again?
can there be salvation?*

*despite all my rage i am still just a rat in a cage
tell me i'm the only one
tell me there's no other one
jesus was an only son for you
and i still believe that i cannot be saved
(Smashing Pumpkins, "bullet with butterfly wings,"
Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness, 1995)*

*The empire remains in control
not just controlling the stock markets
not just controlling the air over Afghanistan
not just controlling the curriculum of York University
but controlling the imaginations of its vanquished subjects*

*salvation is impossible
nothing has been changed
nothing will be changed
the foundations of the empire have not been shaken
the economy is strong
it is business as usual
get the degree, get the job, get the car,
go to Disneyland with the kids!*

*But the voice won't go away
to hell with Disneyland!
to hell with the stock market of the empire!
to hell with an education that keeps your imagination
in exile!
we're going home!
this is exodus time
and where there is exodus,
there is glory
so get on board this exodus train
and let this subversive memory*

break the imposed amnesia of the empire

So the voice calls out to the prophet,
the voice addresses the campus minister
"Cry out" says the voice!

And Chong says,
"what shall I cry?
after all, the people are like grass,
they are like the flower of the field,
terribly fragile,
they can't take too much
they will wither and fade if the breath
of the Lord blows on them"

And the voice replies,
"you have perceived well
the people are like grass
and their empires come and go
but the Word of our God
that creation bearing and calling Word
that promissory Word of covenant
that Word!
stands forever
you preach that Word"

In a world of imperial decree
a world of spin doctors and media control
a world of corporate logos and consumer imaginations
a world of academic credentials, tenure and refereed
journals

the prophet
— the campus minister —
speaks an unauthorized word
reclaims an alternative memory
proclaims a sovereignty counter to the empire

This is good news
— a gospel —
that cuts through the rhetoric of the empire
breaks the spell of the status quo
liberates us from the numbness born of imperial
consumption
and proclaims to a worn out and suicidal culture,
that it's stuck in a deadly moment that it can't get out of

... you are such a fool
To worry like you do
I know it's tough, and you can never get enough
Of what you don't really need now... my oh my

You've got to get yourself together
You've got stuck in a moment and you can't get out of it
Oh love look at you now
You've got yourself stuck in a moment and you can't get out
of it
(U2, "Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out Of,"
All That You Can't Leave Behind, 2000)

Stuck in a moment that we can't get out of
and the prophet brings four words
four words to exiled and abandoned Israel
four words to a self-imploding culture choking
on its own affluence
four words to the nomads of York University
four words designed to get us unstuck from
this terrible moment:

"Here is your God"

in the face of the pretended sovereignty of the market
in the face a dehydrated and captivated imagination
in the face of the imperial control of the academy
in the face of the forces of normality that keep us in exile
the campus minister audaciously proclaims
a sovereignty alternative to the empire

"Here is your God"
exile is over
the path home is through the wilderness
because, "Here is your God"
"Take a look!
The Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him."

Here comes a warrior king
a God with an arm that liberates the oppressed
a sovereign God who legitimates all rivals
only such a God measures the waters
in the hollow of his hand
only such a God can bring comfort in exile
only such a God can deconstruct the idols
only such a God can take every thought captive
only such a God can dismiss the nations
in their unbearable lightness
only such a God can give us a hope
that subverts the empire
only such a God can bring us home

*and so Chong is called to a prophetic ministry
suffused with gentleness and pastoral care
gather up the discomfited
the derailed and desperate
weep with those who weep
and hold them until their tears are dried*

So, "Here's to Yahweh"
and "to hell with Babylon!"
We don't need to be slaves of the empire
because we are subjects of the King!

"Here's to Yahweh"
and "to hell with Babylon!"
We don't need to be slaves of the empire
because we are subjects of the King!

But the campus minister isn't finished
he isn't just a prophet,
he is also a pastor
and his God is not just a warrior
but also a shepherd

this God speaks with the "voice of the Nova/
smile of the dew" (Cockburn)
strong enough to liberate and to overthrow
idolatrous empires
gentle enough to heal and lovingly protect
a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out
a bruised reed he will not break

and so Chong is called to a prophetic ministry
suffused with gentleness and pastoral care
gather up the discomfited
the derailed and desperate
weep with those who weep
and hold them until their tears are dried
their fearful shivering subsides
and their mourning is transformed into dancing
and to those who live in anxiety during these dark days
tell them that today is the day of salvation
today is a beautiful day — don't let it get away
the homecoming of the Kingdom of God is at hand!

*It's a beautiful day
Beautiful day
Don't let it get away*

*Touch me, take me to that other place
Reach me, I know I'm not a hopeless case*

*What you don't have you don't need it now
What you don't know you can feel it somehow
What you don't have you don't need it now
You don't need it now, you don't need it now*

U2, "Beautiful Day," All that You Can't Leave Behind, 2000

Isaiah proclaimed comfort in exile
comfort to the discomfited
Jesus did not come to those who were well
but to the sick
Chong is sent to the broken-hearted
the confused
the lonely
the displaced
the betrayed

To an academy founded in human autonomy
and the imperialism of secular rationality
Chong asks, "did the Creator God consult you
for enlightenment?"

To a world of nation rising up against nation
Chong audaciously proclaims that "the nations are
like a drop in the bucket"

To a civilization collapsing under the weight of its own
refuse
Chong insists that this is our Father's world

To those burdened down by their sin, their brokenness,
their disappointment
Chong repeats the invitation of his Savior,
"Come unto me all you who are weary
and carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest."

And to Chong and Martha
in the face of hard days and long nights,
in the face of frustration
and exhaustion,
Isaiah says,
those who wait for the Lord
— those who work and wait for a miracle —
will renew their strength
they shall have the agility of eagles
they shall run through the campus of York University
but will not be weary
they shall walk across the concrete fields of man
but they will not faint
for the Lord you serve is an everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth
he does not faint or grow weary
and for him, every day is a beautiful day.

Song credits:

Bruce Cockburn, "The Whole Night Sky," *Charity of Night*, ©1996 Golden Mountain Music
Nine Inch Nails, "The Wretched," *The Fragile nothing Halo Fourteen*, ©1999 Interscope Records
Smashing Pumpkins, "bullet with butterfly wings," *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, ©1995 Virgin Records
U2, "Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out Of," *All That You Can't Leave Behind*, © 2000 Universal International Music

Meditations/Poetry

Reflections on the journey of faith

The following two meditations are from a fine book of daily readings published by Calvin College entitled *My Heart I Offer*, alluding, of course, to the Calvin crest. Each daily meditation is written by a different person – all alumni of Calvin College. Among the writers you will recognize such names as Bert Witvoet, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Henrietta ten Harmsel, Richard Mouw, Calvin Seerveld and, if you are a Calvin grad, several of the people you went to school with.

If variety is the spice of life, this is a spicy dish indeed.

As a sample of the menu offered up we give you the last, by a man who taught many of us, either directly or indirectly through his writings, and the first by another man, who continues to teach the church as well as the teachers of the church.

You don't have to be a Calvin grad to be buoyed and enriched by the quality of these meditations. Available from The Calvin Alumni Association, 3201 Burton St., SE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546. Tel: 1-616-957-6146, or alumni@calvin.edu. Cost: \$10.00 (US)

The Last Word

December 31
Revelation 2:6-21;
Isaiah 1:18; John 7:37
By Gordon Spykman '49

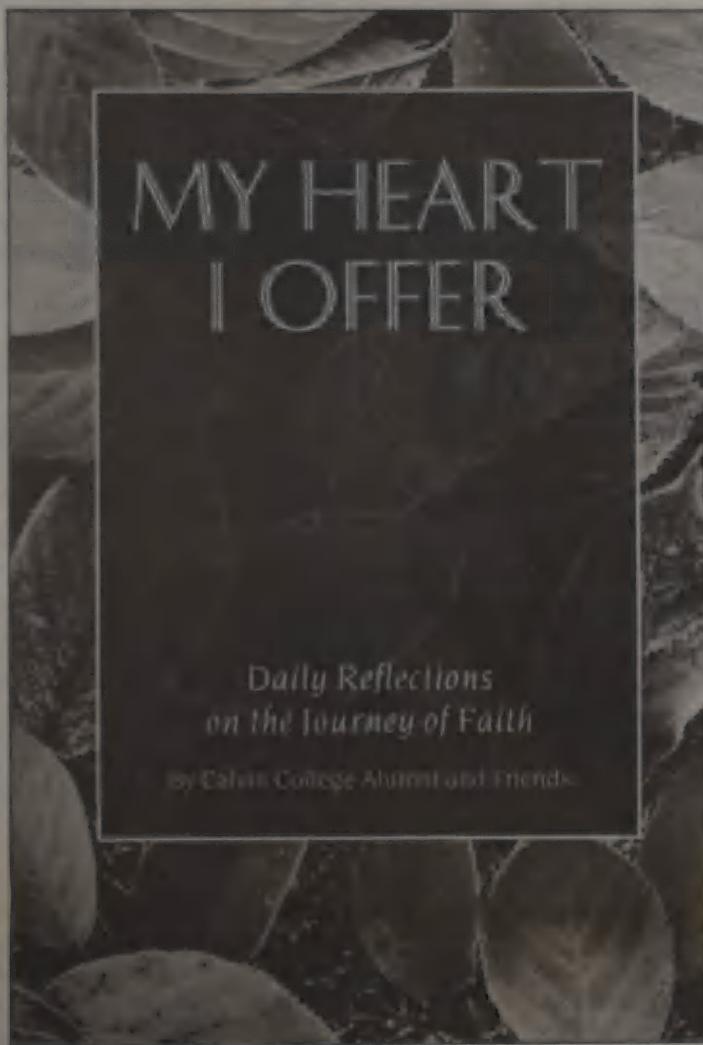
Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my reward, to repay every one according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

(Rev. 22:12)

In the Bible the first Word is God's. The last Word, too. And all along the way God keeps sending forth His Word. All these words, says Christ to John, are "trustworthy and true." In the beginning God spoke his Word. "Let there be" and so it was. At the crossroads of history the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ, and dwelt among us. Now, as the curtain falls, it is still the Word of God which governs our lives. The world is unthinkable apart from God's Word.

The final Word, which echoes through this closing scene, is "Come!" In the beginning God said to man, "Come walk with me." Through the prophets and apostles God said, "Come, let us reason together." In Christ, God said it again, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden."

Now in the end all the players in this drama, like an antiphonal choir, join in this chant: "Come,



Lord Jesus, come quickly! Let him who is thirsty come!"

The call to everlasting glory comes to us today as the call to obedient discipleship. What more could God say that He has not said? The next move is ours. Let us keep His Word and live it.

God with Us

January 1
Psalm 139:1
By Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. '67

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. (Ps. 139:1)

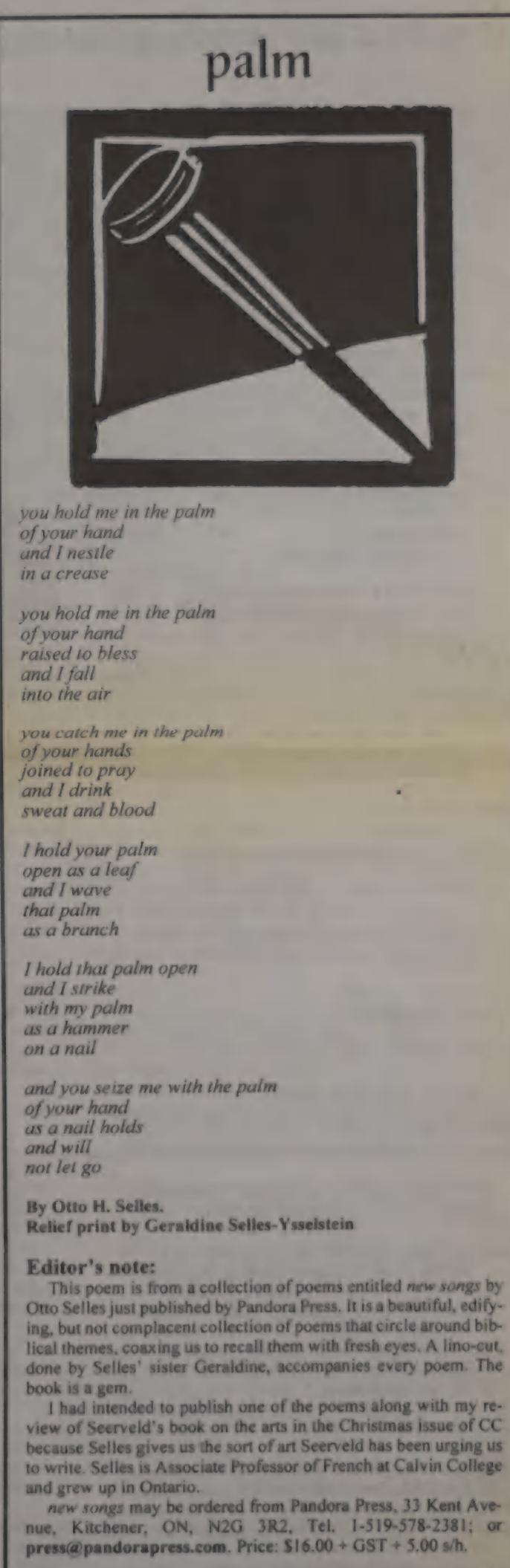
The psalmist prays to the inescapable God. We can shield our thoughts from each other, but not from God. We can hide our shame, but not from God. We can outsmart our competitors, but nobody outsmarts God. Even death brings no escape. People who hope to end it all discover God on the other side and have to face him again.

It can make a person crazy. Everywhere we go, there is God. Even inside our own brain, there is God. We always have company. We never have privacy. God is always before us, and, as Paul Tillich wrote, this is why people always try to kill him. Our Savior ended up on a Roman cross because he

brought God much too close.

But even "the death of God" brings no end to God. Human wickedness does its worst, and God absorbs it. Then God transcends it. According to the Easter gospel, God rises above our evil and fills the world as never before.

The stubborn fact is that we can't get away from God. Where would we go? There's no exit. There's no place that's out-of-bounds. We are metaphysically outflanked by God, and our only choice is to surrender. Inside the cradle of grace, our only choice is to take our heart in our hands and offer it to God. The result is a miracle. To give ourselves up to God is to find our destiny with the one "whom to serve is perfect freedom." In that perfect freedom we can confidently and joyfully say, "O Lord, you have searched me, and you know me. You know me in the light and in the shadows. You know me in my pride and in my despair. You know what I said and what I almost said. You know my secrets, and you love me still. Nothing I do will make you love me more. None of my doubts will make you love me less. And when my end comes, I shall awake and discover that you are with me after all."



Sports/News

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides

It's worth it

A few years ago, I complained in one of my columns about the practice of "cutting" players in school sports. I was outraged at how teachers/coaches could destroy the self-esteem of kids by thinning out weaker players in order to make stronger teams. At the other end of the spectrum, I have also criticized how some kids fail to realize their limitations and insist on pursuing sports and other activities where they have no abilities. There have even been times in my teaching career where I've questioned the existence of competitive sports at all (at least at the middle school level). Although I'm not a parent, I know that many parents struggle with different problems that come up because of their kids' involvement in sports.

Many things have happened in the past few years, though, that have given me good cheer about kids and sports. In fact, I think competitive sports have tremendous benefits for kids. They help build integrity, teamwork, higher personal standards, and self-worth (among other things). A couple of instances from my last few years of teaching illustrate this.

Basketball breakthrough

A couple of years ago, I had a grade eight student who lived on the fringes in school. He didn't really belong anywhere, and the more he was aware of it the harder he tried to be cool. It didn't work, and he was lonely. As teachers, we tried a number of things to help. Basketball was the breakthrough. This guy poured his heart into the game. He was all over the floor, rushing forward on offense and hustling back on defense. He never scored many points, but his heart for the game showed through and won him respect. Slowly he began to feel himself more worthwhile and less of an outsider. The last time I checked, he was a much better adjusted, happy student.

Another example. My wife, Monica, just finished coaching a middle school girls' volleyball team. They weren't quite ready for the Olympic tryouts yet, but she worked with the talent they had. From day one, they worked hard and were eager to learn. In their final tournament of the year, they placed 11th out of 14 teams. That didn't matter. They played tough. Nobody blamed anyone else for losing. They thanked Monica at the end and asked her to be their coach next year.

What's going on?

"What's going on?" you might ask. Aren't kids supposed to be spoiled, characterless zombies these days? No, they're not. I think kids today have just as much integrity as kids have ever had. Living in a valueless, character-warping world, they just need ways to nurture their integrity. Sports is one of the best ways. I have seen many examples in competitive sports where kids developed teamwork skills and put themselves last — kids who I thought were incapable of doing so.

Sports are great for kids. If you're fed up with the violence, politics, and materialism of competitive sports, reconsider what it can do for your kids or grandkids.

I've seen it work miracles.

It amazes me how God works in parts of our culture that we think are so broken.

Just when we've given up on the music industry, for example, we see a rock band like U2 come out with a new album that returns to spiritual themes of grace and forgiveness. That's not kosher in this day and age.

So, too, in sports. Providing we don't give up our battle to be discerning and faithful, our Lord works good for the benefit of our kids,

And our world.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.



Mission offers shelter, sharing for the Christmas season

Margaret Dinsdale

TORONTO — Christmas conjures up many images for different people: carol services, visiting friends and family, children's excitement as they open gifts, sumptuous meals and happy memories. For those who serve society's most needy, the images of a forsaken family seeking shelter and a birth in a manger are closer to reality.

At Yonge Street Mission, a Christian agency with four sites and 30 programs in downtown Toronto, Christmas is about sharing with those less fortunate and bringing joy and hope into damaged lives.

Homeless, at-risk youth

"We serve homeless and at-risk youth and their children," says Ruth Ewert, interim director of the Mission's Evergreen location on Yonge Street. Evergreen houses a drop-in centre, day care, health centre and a resource centre that helps with issues such as employment readiness and training programs. "We get an average of 100 to 130 kids through our doors each day and we have contact with about 90 children of street youth. What's unique about us is that our doors are open on Christmas day when most agencies are closed. Some kids might try to go home for Christmas but sometimes they're greeted with a frying pan or a hammer at the door."

A donor gives \$7,000 in \$100 gift certificates to families who have children under five years. One young single mother was moved to tears by this generosity. A local church challenged four others to gather gifts for the youth with the stipulation that they be new. "You wouldn't give your 16- or 17-year-old used gifts," Ewert explained. "One family decided that instead of giving each other gifts they would take a single mom and her baby shopping and have her come to their home for Christmas day."

Christmas gifts at Evergreen

And Christmas day at Evergreen is special indeed. The youth get a numbered ticket when they arrive for a chance at door prizes that are drawn throughout the day, and another number that, when called, allows them to go to the gift room and fill a sack with whatever they choose. One half of the room is filled with toys, the other with knapsacks, jackets, tennis shoes, sleeping bags and other items. After other activities and hors d'oeuvres, they sit down to deco-



COURTESY YONGE STREET MISSION

Guests are welcomed to one of Yonge Street Mission's Christmas programs.

rated tables and choose their dinner from a menu and are served by waiters. The banquet is donated, cooked and served by a donor family and their friends.

"People think that marginalized youth like these are unappreciative because they have developed a rough and tough exterior in order to survive," Ewert says. "You scratch that exterior and you see how much they are hurting, that they are longing for love and belonging which they didn't get in their homes. I have been blessed and I seek to share my material blessings or something from my heart. I don't need gifts, I just want to share some of the love I have experienced."

Sharing is also experienced in a big way at the Christian Community Centre (CCC), another Yonge Street Mission located near the low-income community of Regent Park. While most of their clients have homes, 86 per cent in the area are tenants and 32 per cent of families live on incomes less than \$20,000 a year. CCC runs programs for youth after-school, socially isolated adults and seniors, women and family drop-ins, a community kitchen, computer classes and more.

"Our catchment area in the downtown area has 80,000 people, making it the densest population in Canada as well as one of the most culturally diverse communities in the world," says Bill Ryan, director of CCC. "There are 110 different nationalities that we serve compared to the 189 recognized by the United Nations."

What he worries about is the shift in society to "blaming the poor for the public debt" and the cuts to social programs in the past decade. He also sees insecurity in the neighborhood with current discussions about the potential redevelopment of Regent Park that does not involve residents and is

concerned that the density will increase. He is also concerned by the fact that three youth involved with his agency have died violently in the past six months, which he attributes to the increase in gun possession. With these grim statistics, what does Christmas mean to Ryan?

Joy, generosity of donors

"Two things come to mind when I think of what happens around here this time of year," he said. "First is the joy and the generosity of donors as well as companies and the people in them. They are full of smiles and laughing as they drop off their donations. The second is when, a couple of days later, families are leaving with food and gifts with tears in their eyes, wanting to know who to thank."

Part of the work at the CCC is to build trust and relationships in small groups, of getting to know people.

"Our mission states that we share God's love, peace, dignity and justice to all people because all people are created in the image of God," he explains. "We give them friendship and the joy of relationship. Some of them go away with the joy of knowing God. Some are happy just to go away with food."

Banquets are special times here as well. An individual donor and his family supplies not only a banquet for families, about 130 people, but the youth go to a Toronto Raptors basketball game, the men's group goes for pizza and bowling and the junior girls cook a gourmet meal. A local church supplies yet another banquet and a concert. And a large food company gives turkeys, food and toys for 300 families and 100 seniors.

Ryan observes, "All this reminds me that we live in a beautiful city filled with beautiful people who really care and want to share."

Theology

Evangelical Theological Society rejects 'open theism,' affirms God's foreknowledge

Russell D. Moore

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP) — After three days of heated debate, the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) voted Nov. 16 overwhelmingly to affirm what almost every Christian in the history of the church has always believed — that God knows everything, including the future decisions of his creatures.

The organization, a professional society of biblical scholars and theologians who affirm the inerrancy of Scripture, brought the issue to the floor after a group of ETS charter members charged that the "openness of God" view being articulated by some society members is outside the boundaries of evangelical conviction.

The non-binding resolution stated that the society believes "the Bible clearly teaches that God has complete, accurate and infallible knowledge of all events past, present and future including all future decisions and actions of free moral agents." The resolution passed on a vote of 253 in favor to 66 opposed with 41 abstentions after a debate that lasted until well after midnight the night before.

Taking issue with open theism

The resolution takes issue with the concept of "open theism" held by evangelical scholars such as Clark Pinnock, Gregory Boyd and John Sanders. God cannot know what will happen in the future, these scholars argue, since future human decisions have not yet been made and thus do not exist to be known. Sanders, a professor of religion at Huntington College in Indiana, presented the open theist case before the society, arguing that an attempt to rule the idea out of bounds could result in an evangelical "Taliban," enforcing doctrinal orthodoxy within the society.

Sanders' view was opposed by a competing presentation by Bruce Ware, associate dean and professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky. Ware pleaded with ETS members to recognize that the denial of God's complete knowledge is a dangerous doctrine that will damage the churches. Ware pointed to a host of Scriptures in which God declares himself to know the future, including passages in which God contrasts his knowledge of the future with the idols that have no such knowledge of future events.

"By its denying of God's

foreknowledge of future free creaturely choices and actions, open theism is vulnerable to the charge of commanding as God one whom the true God declares is false and worthless," Ware said.

Open theists argue God has made mistakes

The ramifications of open theism include the undermining of the gospel itself, Ware said, since God could not have kept with certainty the prophetic promises of the Old Testament, up to and including the crucifixion of Jesus. Nor, Ware said, can a God ignorant of the future guarantee the future success of his purposes. Ware took issue with statements by open theists who argue that God has made mistakes, including statements by Pinnock that even Jesus was mistaken at least once on a matter of predictive prophecy.

"The cost to doctrine and faith by open theism's denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge is too great to be accepted within evangelicalism," Ware said. "Thoughtful Christians, particularly Christian leaders, must speak out on the openness proposal to say what the glory of God, the truthfulness of Scripture and our own consciences require."

Before the debate on the resolution, Ware pleaded with open theists to repent of their teachings and reconsider the biblical portrayal of a God who knows the end from the beginning.

"You don't have to go this way!" Ware said. "I won't say, 'I told you so.' I will praise God! Come back to the fold."

The vote was preceded by one charter member, theologian Roger Nicole, arguing that the founders of the organization would have been horrified to know that the issue of God's knowledge would ever be up for debate among evangelicals, or that anyone who held such a view would even seek membership.

Nicole argued that the society should vote to uphold foreknowledge, thereby signaling to open theists that they should "exercise their precious free will and resign." If the open theists refuse to voluntarily leave the organization, Nicole said, the ETS should then move to expel them through its constitutional process.

"Open theism is a cancer on the Evangelical Theological Society," Nicole said. "That cancer has not been resolved by chemotherapy or radiation. The only remaining option is surgery."

Ware and Nicole, a member of a

Florida Baptist congregation, were joined by other Southern Baptists in opposing the open theist position. Charlie Draper, professor of New Testament at Southern Seminary's Boyce College, and Russ Bush, academic dean at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina, both argued that a denial of God's foreknowledge is a denial of the inerrancy of Scripture, since a God who cannot know the future cannot guarantee the truth of a Bible that speaks to future events. Draper said the debate might well be "the issue of the century" for American evangelicals.

A denial of inerrancy

"If this line cannot be drawn, no line can be drawn," Draper said. "If this view cannot be said to be a denial of inerrancy, then no view can be said to be a denial of inerrancy."

The resolution was opposed by Clark Pinnock, who as a faculty

member at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1960s, once championed a very conservative vision of historic Christian orthodoxy, but who has now significantly altered his convictions not only about the foreknowledge of God, but also about the meaning of inerrancy and the necessity of conscious faith in Christ for salvation. Pinnock argued that the ETS should not condemn open theism, but instead should recognize that "the best advice about a new religious movement" comes from the Pharisee Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-39. If open theism is not of God, it will come to nothing, Pinnock suggested.

The Southern Baptist Convention has addressed the question of open theism, first in a resolution offered by Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. at the 1999 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta. The resolution passed by the convention affirmed that God knows all things, including the

future. The SBC then addressed the issue in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement of beliefs, revising the article on God to affirm that God's "perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures."

The ETS debate was preceded by a flurry of papers presented on both sides of the issue, and by an address by ETS President Darrell Bock, a New Testament scholar at Dallas Theological Seminary, who argued that sharp boundaries should not be drawn for the evangelical movement. Instead, he argued, evangelicalism may be likened to a "village green," which is defined more by the centre than by the boundaries. After the vote, ETS program chair Millard Erickson, a longtime opponent of open theism, predicted that the resolution would not end the debate over these issues within American evangelicalism.

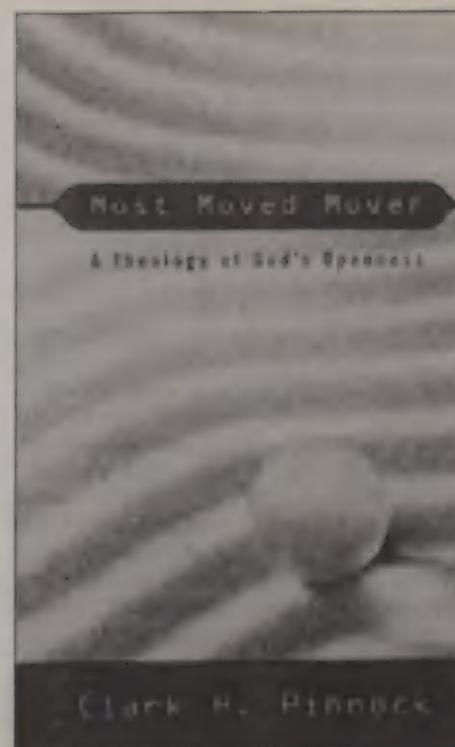
Pinnock takes on Southern Baptists in book on the 'openness of God'

Russell D. Moore

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — In the 1960s, Clark Pinnock was a young professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who took on the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention for its lack of commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture. Now, Pinnock is once again turning sights on Southern Baptists, but this time from the left. What is most surprising about this transformation is not that Clark Pinnock has changed his mind; it's that Pinnock now thinks God changes his mind too.

Pinnock argues God changes his mind

For several years, Pinnock, professor of theology at Canada's McMaster Divinity School, has advocated a view known as the "openness of God." This perspective holds that God does not know the future decisions of his creatures. Therefore, Pinnock argues, God sometimes changes his mind, moving from Plan "A" to Plan "B" as God gains new information about the unfolding of history. Pinnock's newest book, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Baker Book House) explains further what exactly he means by this.



In developing this new view of God, Pinnock devotes much space to lamenting the stance taken by the Southern Baptist Convention in affirming the traditional view that God knows everything. The SBC's 2000 Baptist Faith and

Message confessional statement states that God is "all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures." Pinnock further laments a 1999 resolution which affirms the classical view of God as omniscient and omnipotent.

Pinnock contends that the Baptist Faith and Message's statement on God is linked to its further statement that the Scripture limits the pastorate to qualified men, and that husbands are to lovingly lead their homes.

"I get suspicious when the same people who want to protect God's sovereignty also want to keep women in their subordinate place," Pinnock writes. "Why do they not see that the Father whom they claim to exist is not the 'father' of patriarchal

See PINNOCK page 17...

Opinion/Theology

Mary's anointment of the feet of Jesus and the allusion to the Song of Songs (2)

Magda Misset-van de Weg

In the last column I talked about the allusion that I see in the story of Mary washing the feet of Jesus to the Song of Songs. In this column I would like to explore the meaning of the word *allusion* and further substantiate my claim that this enhances Mary's gesture as an act of love in all its multifaceted splendor.

An allusion is an indirect suggestion, a hint or a indirect reference to another text. It is a relational device which refers the reader to another text. The relational quality allows the reader to build up significant links between two texts. Because an allusion is never obvious, the reader's attention needs to be drawn to an intertextual relationship. It entails the recognition of a marker, or a "stumbling block," which draws attention to the text to which it alludes.

Pause and ponder

What is the marker in the gospel of John which causes the reader to pause and ponder? This marker can be found in the text which says, "...and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment." This is found only in the gospel of John. And it is mentioned in combination with a woman and a man reclining at table. These two markers guided me to the Song of Songs 1:14 (Septuagint): "While the king reclined (at table), my nard gave forth its fragrance."

Because an allusion is like a piece broken off from a more complete and earlier text and incorporated into a new one, other

indicators in the contexts of both texts help to assure that we are indeed dealing with an allusion. They can be helpful in establishing that the author was familiar with the alluded-to text.

A quick glance at the context of both texts reveals that they have one thing in common, namely the theme of love. But there are other connections. In John 12:1-8 the amount of sensory language is remarkable. There are references to taste, touch, scent and hearing and seeing (They made him a *meal*; Mary *anointed* the feet of Jesus and *wiped* his feet with her hair, the house was filled with *fragrance*; the crowd *heard* he was there and came to see Jesus). In the Song of Songs too, the senses go on full alert. The Song celebrates human, sensual life. In the first four verses of the Song of Songs the senses are immediately stirred: by *hearing* in the Song, by *touch* in the loving, by the *scent* of the ointment and the *taste* in the kisses.

Secondly, in the Song of Songs, the identity of the male lover is elusive. The identity is obscure, in the sense that he cannot be fully known, or easily packaged. In the gospel of John, the question of Jesus' identity is not so obscure, but rather a matter of dispute. Jesus cannot be easily "packaged". He is presented as the messiah, the king, the son, the bridegroom, the teacher, the shepherd, the well of living water, or the manna from heaven. Already, some of these designations bring the Song of Song's lover to mind. He too is called, among others, the shepherd, the king and son.

There is one marker that de-

mands special attention: the image of the beloved as the one whom my soul loves (Song of Songs 1:7; 3:1.2.3.4; 5:6). Exegetes have often noted that the scene in which Mary Magdalene seeks the body of Jesus (John 20:11-18) is an echo of the Song of Songs 3:1-4, where the woman searches for him whom her soul loves. Mary cannot find him and asks the guards whether they have seen him. When she finally does find him, she holds him and does not want to let him go. I refer to it here because of the love that motivates the two Mary's for the one whom their soul loves. This is the tie that binds the two narratives in John 12 and John 20 together.

Connection between love and commandments

I also would like to draw attention to another aspect of the love theme: the connection between love and commandments as summarized in John 15:

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you, abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

The love depicted in the Song of Songs has been interpreted as the love between God and the people of Israel. The response of the people of Israel to God's love was to live according to God's commandments. It has been said that "the starting point of all love is the love of God for Israel and the love of Israel for God." This starting point of all love is a love that is not exclusive, but rather inclusive of all other manifestations of love.

The God-Israel mutual love invites us, in return, to reflect upon the love between human lovers. The evangelist through his allusion in John 12:3 evokes this dimension.

This brings me to the larger meaning of the effect of the allusion. Interpretations of the Bible often leave the impression that the ancient people did not really live and experience life the way we do. But of course they did. They knew pleasure, pain and joy. There was more to their lives than adherence to God. The Bible taps the emotions of people, both human and religious.

When we allow these dimensions to surface, we are jolted out of spiritual complacency. New horizons open up and allow us to see how shifts back and forth from the horizontal axis (human-human) to the vertical axis (divine-human, human-divine) are inherent qualities of Biblical texts. In the gospel of John the theme of love enlightens this shift, drawing readers and hearers to the human as well as the spiritual dimensions. John 3:11-12 indicates such a shift:

We speak of what we know, and bear witness of what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Thus, Mary of Bethany is motivated by the most fundamental, enduring and existential human emotion — love. Like the woman in the Song of Songs, she loves the beloved. Reciprocating his love — the best there is — she boldly

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



pours out her gift of love — the best there is — for the man whom her soul loves. She anoints him with sweet smelling oil, touching and caressing him and entangling him with her hair.

What she expresses is not the theology-laden agape, the non-carnal love that smothers any real emotion, but eros, the resource of empowerment between human beings, the given of creation we cannot live without, because to love is to live. It is this love/eros, which must first be understood before any allegory of love between God and Israel, or Jesus and the church could even work, because as is sung in the Song of Songs, human love is God's love incarnate. The same is expressed in the first letter of John 4:7-8:

Beloved let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, For God is love.

Magda Misset-van de Weg lives in Tilburg, the Netherlands. She has a Doctorate in Theology from the University of Utrecht. Her article will be published in its complete format in: Maaike de Haardt & Anne-Marie Korte (eds.), *Common Bodies: Everyday Practices Gender and Religion*, Münster, etc. LIT Verlag, 2002.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at 780-473-0970 or e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com.

Pinnock challenges Southern Baptists

... continued from page 16

power but the God of Jesus Christ who woos us through his self-giving love?"

The conservative theologians Pinnock engages in the book are, almost to a man, Southern Baptist scholars. Pinnock takes particular issue with Mohler and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of Christian theology Bruce A. Ware. Ware's most recent book, *God's Lesser Glory*, is a defense of the orthodox doctrine of God's knowledge against the revisionist view asserted by open theists such as Pinnock, Gregory Boyd and John Sanders. Pinnock acknowledges that Ware understands and fairly states the open view, but Pinnock vigorously

disagrees with Ware's contention that the open view is blatantly unbiblical.

Pinnock: Biblical writers disagree with each other

Although most of Pinnock's volume is a restatement of the "open" view of God already articulated by him and others, the book does include several surprising new arguments. For example, Pinnock reveals just how far his doctrine of Scripture has evolved. Having years ago abandoned this conservative view of Scripture, Pinnock goes so far in the pages of *Most Moved Mover* that the biblical writers sometimes simply disagree among themselves, even on the question of

what God knows.

"The Bible does not speak with a single voice; there is a dialogue between the different voices," Pinnock argues. "The writings contain a long and complex search for the mind of God and in this struggle various points of view compete and interact."

Pinnock also makes the frank claim that God's limited knowledge of the future causes him sometimes to get prophecies simply wrong. Noting that evangelicals "might not like to admit it," Pinnock recites a litany of prophecies that turned out to go unfulfilled. Pinnock suggests that John the Baptist was wrong when he prophesied that Jesus would cast the wicked into the fire, and that

"contrary to Paul, the second coming was not just around the corner." Perhaps most startlingly, Pinnock claims that Jesus was wrong at one point because "despite Jesus, in the destruction of the temple, some stones were left one on the other (Mt 24:2)."

"God is free in the matter of fulfilling prophecy and is not bound to a script, even his own," Pinnock argues. "The world is a project and God works on it creatively; he is free to strike out in new directions. We cannot pin the free God down."

Pinnock further "strikes out in new directions" of his own when he suggests that there is another issue "that has not been raised yet in the open view of God," namely

the question of whether God has a body. While classical Christian doctrine has always insisted that God the Son does indeed have a body, having taken upon himself human nature in the Incarnation, orthodox Christianity historically has maintained that the Father is a spirit, a consensus Pinnock asks Christians to reconsider.

Pinnock's book highlights the role of the SBC in this discussion. Not only has the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. taken a confessional stance on this controversy, the revised statement of faith also ensures that SBC seminary faculties and publications are to reflect the convictions of Southern Baptist churches that God's knowledge is unlimited.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

I READ ON AN AVERAGE one book a week. Almost always one I own. I noticed an interesting correlation between a household owning books and academic excellence: children in families with more than 250 books score high on literacy — 554 — a full 120 points more than children in households with no books. This proves that a library is a must for every home. Reading is the key to knowledge and a reader is never bored, and, if there were statistics on this matter, I am sure that readers live longer, because their lives are more interesting.

I treat my books — the non-fiction, that is — by underlining passages that catch my attention so that I can more easily find back what I thought important. I always get much more out of the second or even the third time around. I also write my comment in the margin, not always related to the book itself, but concerning a thought that hits me while I am reading. Keeping one's mind active helps also defray the onset of Alzheimer's, I think.

READING HAS ALWAYS been my hobby. I remember that as a 10-year-old I was laid up for six weeks with an infection — no penicillin in those pre-war days — and read 100 books, an average of two per day. I imagine that they were not the most academic, but so what. Reading is one way of passing time that is never wasted. So whenever I am not writing

something, I am reading — apart from eating and sleeping and, in the summer, gardening. I also subscribe to a lot of magazines; after all, each week I have to come up with a new column and they have to have a certain amount of information which I have to digest and rephrase in my own words.

THIS WEEK'S BOOK WAS *The Ingenuity Gap*, by Thomas Homer-Dixon, a Toronto professor, who writes in an engaging, easily absorbed, personal style. I first saw his name in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, when Robert Kaplan quoted him in an article entitled, "The Coming Anarchy", in which Homer-Dixon states that future wars and civil violence will often arise from scarcities of resources such as water, cropland, forests and fish. In his latest book, he makes the frightening calculation that "when we look at the period 1900-2050 — barely two life-times long — our annual impact on the planet's environment will have increased more than 'forty-fold' and almost two-thirds of this increase will have occurred in the first five decades of the 21st century, that is in the next 50 years.

This analysis tells us that we have experienced, so far, only the earliest stages, just the leading edge, of the planet's environmental crisis. Far, far greater environmental challenges are still to come.

The main thesis of this book is that, as the world becomes more complex, so do its problems, and the solutions to these problems become tougher to grasp. Homer-Dixon wonders whether our ingenuity, our ability to innovate, our brain power to find intelligent and responsible solutions to the world's immense problems, is up to the challenge. What we face, says he, is "a very real chasm that sometimes looms between our ever more difficult problems and our lagging ability to solve them."

As the gap widens political disintegration and violent upheaval can result, reaching into our economies and daily lives in subtle, unforeseen ways.

In the Steps of Paul

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THIS WAS RE-AFFIRMED in my mind when I read in the *Globe and Mail* the statement by 100 Nobel laureates — the best brains in the world — who expressed their concern for the world by telling us all that the most profound danger to World Peace will stem from the legitimate demands of the world's poor. Global warming, caused by us, will affect them most. If, to make a fast buck, we also sell them our modern weapons, we can expect these to be used against us "in a conflagration that can engulf both rich and poor. The only hope for the future lies in co-operative international action, legitimized by democracy."

The statement ends by saying: "To survive in a world we have transformed, we must learn to think in a new way. As never before, the future of each depends on the good of all."

Perhaps our cure can start by admitting our hubris, the prevailing overconfidence which typifies our technological society. What schools and families — people of all ages — must cultivate is a humble and respectful recognition that we live in a frail world, which has definite limits. Professor Thomas Homer-Dixon has written a warning that, if we continue in the direction we are going, we are creating a world a lot more complex than our minds can grasp or our capacities can handle. The book, by the way, won the 2001 Governor General award for best non-fiction.

A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF today's complexity for which no solution has been found lies in the economic field. Economists have studied long and hard and perhaps written valuable theses by which they earned the right to be called Doctor. But, in spite of all their learning, they have a dismal record in predicting recessions. *The Economist* reports that as recently as February, 95 per cent of American economists said it wouldn't happen, but it has. The U.S.A. is now officially in a recession, even though as late as September few were expecting it. Of 60 recessions in the world during the 1990s, two-thirds remained undetected by consensus forecasts as late as April of the year in which they took place.

I read a very optimistic statement in a couple of papers: "The worst is already behind us because the average recession lasts less than a year and this one started about nine months ago." It is like saying to a 75 year old man "You'll die in two years, because

the average male has a life span of 77 years."

Economists are not only bad in spotting recessions, their record is equally dismal about their length. We all are different and so are recessions. This one comes after a record 10 years of expanding markets. Based on this maximum stretch of prosperity, it would seem more logical to conclude that we are now also in for a long period of contraction.

YOU MAY SAY: HERE goes this pessimist again. However, I base this not only on my gut feeling, but also on hard evidence. This recession was caused by the popping of a financial bubble and an investment boom turned to bust. Our current recession is more like a pre-war variety, more like the one that has plagued Japan since 1990, more than 10 years ago. Also, very few Americans are entitled to Unemployment Insurance, and welfare has been drastically cut. Their lack of cash will prolong a recovery and add to the crime rate. Their savings are at their lowest level ever, while personal and corporate debt is at an all-time high. And then people are foolish. A few women, just laid off in Las Vegas, went on a spending spree to prove themselves to be good Americans, confident that the funds would be there somehow. Totally irrational.

SLOW TIMES, EXCESS capacity, little ready cash, high debts, means sinking prices, which makes deflation a real danger. Deflation starts with that dreaded letter 'D', as in Disaster, Depression, Debt, Disease, Dire, Desperate. It embodies all these things. Inflation and prosperity go together. During boom times people want everything now, bid them up, which causes shortages and higher prices. Deflation is the opposite: lots of stuff for sale and on sale, but little money. To get rid of merchandise, store owners mark down everything. But... deflation leads to a curious situation: why should people buy today for a dollar what tomorrow might cost 98 cents? Deflation stifles market activity and makes cash more valuable. With inflation people on fixed income suffer but with deflation they are better off. The flipside is that those who have debt, must pay it back in more expensive dollars.

Deflation is not all bad. Technological advances can also depress prices. Long distance calls are a fraction of what they used to be and so are computers, but usually deflation results in

bankruptcies, which might happen if these free-spending ladies in Las Vegas don't have the money when their bills are due after Christmas. It can also affect corporations and banks, as weaker markets and high interest costs reduce net income. Also, even though their wages are more valuable, workers are reluctant to accept lower pay so that real employment costs go up, forcing companies to cut costs by laying off more workers, which, in turn, deepens the recession.

Beware when economists predict a short recession and a rosy future. Their crystal ball-gazing is conditioned by the portfolios they manage, on which their clients expect a healthy return. And never believe politicians. Even when the 'experts' know that the economic horizon looks bleak, they are not allowed to say so, because this might become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

During the last decade, all Western central banks, under the leadership of Alan Greenspan, have fought inflation as enemy #1, afraid that it might go out of control, as happened in Germany in the 1920s and in the Americas in the early 1980s, when mortgage rates and loan interests shot up 15 to 20 per cent.

PERHAPS THE WISE MEN in the Western Central Banks fought the wrong war, or, at least, under-estimated the dangers of deflation. Given a choice between inflation and deflation, most people opt for rising prices because it usually means full employment, while deflation signals all the bad things: high unemployment, high crime rates, misery and turmoil everywhere. Just imagine economic conditions such as we had during the depression in the 1930s. We live in uncertain times, when the unexpected suddenly may happen. Witness the collapse of the seventh largest company in the world, Enron, almost overnight.

So, just in case: stay on the safe side: hang on to your money: buy only what is needed: it might cost less tomorrow and even less the day after. Become as self-sufficient as possible, that is, no debts, no or little mortgage, pay credit card balances always in full, as all these can become a stranglehold if deflation really hits. And the possibility is there.

I have encountered some kidney problems. It seems that a genetic condition is asserting itself. So far, the medical system has treated me well.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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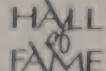
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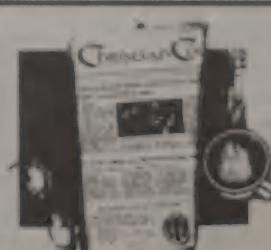
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Kyle, Tallia, Shannon, Makenna

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House to be held at Mountainview

CRC, 290 Main St. E., Grimsby, Ont.

on Sat. Jan. 19, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Best Wishes Only!

Home Address: 9 Park Rd. South,

Grimsby, ON L0R 2A0

Obituary

Nijverdal, Ov.
the Neth

Whitby, Ont.
Canada

January 4, 1899 - December 5, 2001
"Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being, praise his holy name."

(Psalm 103:1)

Our dear father, Opa and great-grandfather,

GERRIT HENDRIK FLIM

went to be with his Lord on Wednesday, December 5, 2001.

At the age of 54 Dad and his family immigrated to Canada in 1953. Living mainly in Whitby, he worked until he was 70, while at the same time serving God in church and Christian school development. After having been married for 47 years, his wife passed away in 1972. Dad then lived with his youngest daughter Joanne and her family until he was 100 years old. He was still riding his bike then! Most recently he lived at long-term care facilities.

Dad has lived a long and fruitful life. His simple and strong faith blessed those he met and knew. The last while when he was totally dependent on others for his daily care, he was content and did not complain. He loved singing his favourite psalms and hymns.

We and many others will miss him very much but we are thankful that he was with us for so many years.

He was predeceased by his wife, Johanna Flim-Dubbink (Feb. 4, 1972) and two sons Herman (Sep. 19, 1944) and George (Dec. 5, 1996).

Loving father of

Aly & Ike Dykstra — Orono, Ont.

Dien Oudyk — Oshawa, Ont.

Henk & Flora Flim — Oshawa, Ont.

Berta & Albert Hosmar — Whitby, Ont.

(George f.) and Anne Flim —

Lethbridge, Alta.

Jenny & Cameron Linnell —

Woodstock, Ont.

(Herman f.)

Joanne & Fred Wind — Whitby, Ont.

Loved Opa of 26 grandchildren and 49 great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on Saturday

December 8, 2001 at the Hebron

Christian Reformed Church, Whitby, Ontario. Rev. B. Bakker officiating.

Correspondence address:

H. Flim, 3755 Ritson Rd. North,

Oshawa, ON L1N 7K4

Teachers

AYLMER, ONT.:

Immanuel Christian School, Aylmer, has a definite opening for Grade 5/Intermediate French due to a maternity leave from March to June 2002. Position has the possibility of extending into the 2002-03 school year.

If interested, please call the school at

519-773-8476. Send resumes to:

Immanuel Christian School

75 Caverly Rd., Aylmer, ON

N5H 2P6

Attn.: Marianne Vangoor

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Classifieds

Obituaries	Obituary	Miscellaneous
<p>October 18, 1941 - December 3, 2001 CORNELIUS WUBBENHORST His wife Marilyn, daughters Paula and Audrey celebrate his life! Address: 6266 Starfield Cres., Mississauga ON L5N 1X4</p> <p>"But those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed." (Isaiah 40:31a)</p> <p>On November 15, 2001 the Lord called to Himself JOHN (JAN) JANSSENS Born in Assen, the Netherlands, on November 17, 1932, John came to Canada in 1948, settling in Sarnia, Ontario. John's career began as a produce manager at Walker Bros. and continued with Purity Dairy and finally as the proprietor of his own store, "Jan's Milk Store". Upon retiring, Jan continued to serve the community by working with the clients of the Sarnia Association for Community Living. A service he proudly continued for 15 years. As a church organist for 62 years his career included 29 years of continuous service at Redeemer Lutheran Church and several years at St. Luke's United Church as well as the Christian Reformed Churches in Sarnia. John was also a life member of the Royal Canadian College of Organists. On November 19, 2001 a service of praise was held to celebrate John's life at the Redeemer Lutheran Church, with Rev. Dr. Roger Ellis officiating. John leaves behind his dear children: Sid & Maureen Janssens — Calgary, Alta. Paul & Lori Janssens — Edmonton, Alta. Judy & Brian Goodman — Sarnia, Ont. John is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Jake & Margaret Janssens of Chatham, Ont., seven grandchildren: Susan, Jessica, Amanda, Angela, Deanna, Sarah and Michael, as well as nieces and nephews. Correspondence address: Judy Goodman, 1495 Blackwell Rd., Sarnia, ON N7S 5M5</p>	<p>Axel, Zid, the Neth. Chatham, Ont. October 9, 1902 - November 21, 2001 WILLIAM DIELEMAN went home to be with his Lord and Saviour, in his 100th year. His family is thankful for the blessing of a long and healthy life entrusted to him. He will be missed by Marie Dieleman, his wife for 75 years since May 6, 2001, and his children: Kay & Everett Hooyer Jane Dieleman Adrian & Attie Dieleman Marie & John Verburg Jim & Ann Dieleman Wilma & Jake VanGorp 24 grandchildren, 21 grandchildren through marriage, and 57 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by two infant great-grandchildren and two brothers. A family funeral service was followed by a memorial service at First Christian Reformed Church, Chatham, on November 24, 2001. Correspondence address: 21 McGeorge Ave., Chatham, ON N7M 3Z3</p>	<p>Happy New Year!</p> <p>The staff of Christian Courier thanks you for your support during 2001: through subscriptions, advertising, donations & good wishes. We look forward to spending the year 2002 with you - wishing you God's blessing all 365 days.</p> <p>We also remind you that tax-receiptable gifts for this year can still be sent to Reformed Faith Witness, even after year end, if you date your cheque in 2001.</p> <p>Best wishes from all of us: Harry, Natasha, Grace, Alan</p> 
<p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>Jarvis Christian Reformed Church is in need of a CARETAKER to start immediately. Benefit package and house available. Please send resume and/or inquires to: Ebenezer CRC, Attention: Mr. John Kloet Jr. Box 239, Jarvis ON N0A 1J0 For more info, call John Kloet at: 519-587-4046.</p>	<p>CHURCH ORGAN SALES PERSON REQUIRED (part- or full-time) The successful candidate will have to demonstrate to be highly motivated, sales oriented and a self-starter. Knowledge in (church) organs a must. We invite you to e-mail your resume to mail@organs.ca</p>	<p>You can manage an emergency</p> <p>(NC) — No one is ever completely out of risk of injury. Disaster can strike anytime, anywhere. However, you can be prepared to manage an emergency if you know what to do. St. John Ambulance, Canada's leader in safety-oriented™ first-aid training, offers courses to teach you what you need to know in an emergency and how to render first aid that could save a life. Reacting efficiently and effectively in an emergency can make all the difference. In cases of serious injury, medical professionals refer to the first hour after the incident as the golden hour, when the chances of sustaining life are greatest. That's why it's imperative that people who respond to an emergency are ready to take immediate action.</p> <p>Follow these Steps to Effective Emergency Scene Management.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call for help and acknowledge a response. If you're injured while trying to help, you'll be in jeopardy if no one has been alerted. 2. Make sure you're safe. Emergency scenes can be dangerous and you must ensure you don't put the casualty or yourself, at risk. 3. Take time to look for hazards and assess the risks of any action you consider. 4. Watch out for an energy source that may have caused the original injury. Is it still active and a threat? (live wires or running machinery can have deadly consequences) 5. Look for secondary hazards, such as leaking fuel at a car crash. 6. Assess yourself. Your first priority is to prevent injury to everyone — including yourself. Can you handle the scene? Are you able to help the casualty? <p>If you have help at the emergency scene, and are awaiting first responders — ambulance, fire fighters, police etc. — try to assign tasks to keep the area safe.</p> <p>Here's what bystanders can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make the area safe. • Find all casualties and assess for conscious response. • Find a first aid kit. • Control onlookers or traffic. • Call for medical help. • Help give first aid, under the direction of a trained individual. • Gather and protect casualties' personal belongings. • Take notes. • Lead emergency personnel to the scene. <p>Emergency Response and the Law In Canada (except Quebec) and most of the United States, you have no legal obligation to help a person in need. However, governments want to encourage people to help others, so they recognize Good Samaritan Principles. These principles protect you if you choose to help someone in need. Keep in mind that once you begin to give assistance, you are obligated to use reasonable skill and care based on your</p>  <p>personal knowledge or level of first aid training. By law, you are considered a Good Samaritan if you give help in good faith, without being paid. You should always get permission to help a conscious casualty, regardless of your level of expertise. Never abandon an injured individual.</p> <p>With proper training and calm, rational thought, you can manage an emergency scene. St. John Ambulance has been helping Canadians learn essential life-saving first-aid skills for more than a century. For more information on how you can make a difference, contact the office nearest you or visit the St. John web site at www.sja.ca.</p> <p><i>- News Canada</i></p>
<p>Address change: Rev. Adrian A. Van Geest, 77 Northernbreeze St., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0 Phone: 905-679-8509 E-mail: aavangeest@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Call Christian Courier today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>	<p>St. John Ambulance first in first aid, for you!</p>
<p>A blessed Christmas and New Year to all, from: Grace Sliekers Holland Christian Homes, Trinity Tower #408, Brampton</p>		

Classifieds

Church Anniversaries	Job Opportunity	Job Opportunity
<p>The Ottewell Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alta. will celebrate their 40th anniversary in February 2002. We invite all former members and friends to join us at a dinner/social evening on Feb. 8 and special services on Sunday, Feb. 10. For more information/dinner tickets please contact: Pastor Fred Heslinga at 780-461-4586.</p> <p>Inglewood CRC (formerly Third CRC) of Edmonton, Alberta will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on February 22-24, 2002 D.V. Join us for Friday family night, a commemorative banquet on Saturday evening, a celebration worship service on Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. and followed by an organ concert/hymn sing at 4:00 p.m. All former members and friends are invited to attend. For banquet reservations and more information please call Coby Benoit at 708-451-5290 or e-mail: cbenoit@powersurfr.com</p>	<p>Timothy Christian School (Rexdale) has a definite opening for PRINCIPAL beginning the 2002 - 2003 school year. Our school of 200 students and thirteen staff was established in 1958 and is situated in a northwest suburb of Toronto, known as Rexdale. If you are a Christian educator who has an active membership in a reformed church interested in leading a dedicated staff, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you use your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in His kingdom. Please send resumes (including references), a statement of faith and a brief philosophy of education to: Timothy Christian School Attn: Principal Search Committee 28 Elmhurst Drive, Rexdale ON M9W 2J5 If you wish to know more about this position please feel free to direct inquiries to Mr. William Groot 416-743-2554</p>	<p>PROGRAM DIRECTOR for Latin America Christian Reformed World Missions The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has an opening for a full time Program Director for Latin America for Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM). Under the supervision of the executive director, the qualified individual will lead and implement the work of CRWM in Latin America and encourage development of staff and partners to maximize the overall ministry. Other responsibilities include implementation of CRWM plans, policies and procedures, supervising and evaluating personnel and programs, investigating new mission opportunities, and reporting valid and necessary information to CRWM and the CRCNA.</p> <p>Bachelor's degree in missiology, theology or organizational management along with advanced knowledge of at least one other culture and language (preferably Spanish) is required. Readiness to travel frequently and/or for extended periods necessary. Excellent interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills are essential. Membership in the Christian Reformed Church or willingness to become a member of the Christian Reformed Church is essential.</p> <p>A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit your resume and a letter of interest by January 25, 2002 to:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Director of Personnel Christian Reformed Church in North America 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE Grand Rapids MI 49560-0500 616-224-5881/Fax: 616-224-5896 colemann@crcna.org</p>
<p>50th Anniversary January 2002 D.V. Wellandport "Riverside" CRC invites all former members to join us for the following: "Afternoon Tea/Open House" Sat. Jan. 19th 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Sunday special services January 20th 10:00 a.m. Coffee social after a.m. service in the Wellandport School Gym Candlelight service: 7:00 p.m. (note time changes) Where are you now? Drop us a line. We'd love to hear from you! Wenda Gerryts 905-386-6448 5007 Canborough Rd. Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0 e-mail: wgerryts@fastmail.ca Joe Van Tuyl 905-386-6817 e-mail: vantuyl@vaxxine.com 738 Lincoln St. Box 8, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>The King's Group RRSP & Supporter Loan Plan</p> <p>An innovative way to support Christian university education AND save for your retirement. Contribute or transfer to The King's Group RRSP today. Promissory notes available at various terms and competitive interest.</p> <p>For more information, contact Ellen Vlieg-Paquette, CA, or Arlene Balzer Phone (780) 465-8307 or E-mail: evlieg-paquette@kingsu.ab.ca or abalzar@kingsu.ab.ca</p> <p>THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE <i>Christian University Education</i> 9125 - 50 Street • Edmonton, Alberta • T6B 2H3 (780) 465-3500 • www.kingsu.ab.ca</p>	<p>Travel</p> <p>Israel A "Mission of Hope" Tour 11 exciting days February 21 - March 3, 2002 Cost: Special Low Price: \$ 2,225. pp ex. Tor. dbl occ. plus dep. taxes</p> <p>Emphasis on: Prayer for Israel; meditations, wonderful sightseeing in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and many more</p> <p>Personally escorted by, Rev. John G. Klomps</p> <p>For complete information and reservation please call or write: Rev. John G. Klomps Meadowvale Travel Inc., 2283 Argentia Rd., Unit 9B Mississauga, ON L5N 5Z2 Tel: 905-826-4141; or toll-free: 1-800-387-2421 Fax: 905-542-0154 Home tel: 905-824-5074 Reg. # 1518992</p>
<p>Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to: Christian Courier at fax #: 905-682-8313, or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com</p>	<p>the Netherlands ALL THE NEWS AND MUCH MORE... the Windmill Only \$24.50 per year Ask for a trial copy.</p> <p>Canada: P.O. Bag 9033, Surrey, BC V3T 4X3 USA: P.O. Box 313, Lynden, WA 98264-0313 Phone: 1-800-881-0705 fax: (604) 532-1734 email: windmill@godutch.net Internet: http://www.GoDutch.com Book Catalogue: Dutch Heritage Pages</p> <p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services. Contact: CRC R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p>	<p>PICTURE THIS!</p> <p>You can advertise in Christian Courier's Business and Service Directory once a month for only: \$25.00 + GST</p>

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Dec. 22	Christmas Concert Ont. Chr. Music Assembly, director Leendert Kooij, André Knevel, organ, Willowdale, Ont. Willowdale United Church 7:30 p.m. Adults \$10, Stu. \$6 children under 12 FREE) Call 416-636-9779
Dec. 27	Concert "The Ambassadors", 8 p.m. Hope CRC, Brantford, Ont. Adm. \$10 p.p., \$25 p.family. See ad.
Dec. 28	Concert "The Ambassadors", 8 p.m. First CRC Hamilton, Ont.(Charlton & Hess) Freewill offering. See ad.
2002	
Jan. 13	Dutch Service Ancaster CRC, 3 p.m. 70 Garner Rd. E, (Hwy 53), Rev. Harry A. Vander Windt preaching.
Jan. 19	Concert St. Thomas "Crescendo" Male Choir, Covenant CRC St. Catharines, 7:30 p.m. Freewill offering. For info. call 519-637-4357
Feb. 8-10	Ottewell CRC, Edmonton, Alta. 40th anniversary. Please call 780-461-4586. See ad in this issue.
Feb. 22-24	50th Anniversary Inglewood CRC, Edmonton, Alta. Friday Family Night, Saturday evening Banquet, Sunday 10 a.m. Celebration Worship Service, 4 p.m. Organ concert/Hymn Sing. See ad in this issue.
April 21	Calgary 1st CRC 50th Anniv. Former members welcome. For info. 403-243-2244 celebr8fifty@aol.com

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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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Burns Lake - CFLO	9:15 am	1400	London - CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Osoyoos - CJOR	8:00 am	1490	Newmarket - CKDX	9:00 am	88.5
Penticton - CKOR	8:00 am	800	Oshawa - CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Port Alberni - CJAV	7:00 pm	1240	Owen Sound - CFOS	7:00 am	560
Prince George - CIRX	7:00 am	94.3	Pembroke - CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
Princeton - CHOR	8:00 am	1400	Sarnia - CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Smithers - CFBV	9:15 am	1230	Stratford - CJCS	8:30 am	1240
Summerland - CHOR	8:00 am	1450	Windsor - CKLW	7:30 am	800
Vernon - CJIB	9:30 pm	940	Wingham - CKNX	10:30 am	920

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ	8:00 am	1340	Saint John - CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND		
High River - CHRB	6:30 pm	1140	Charlottetown - CFCY	7:00 am	630
Edmonton - CJCA	6:00 pm	930			
Westlock - CFOK	7:30 am	1370			

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan - CJSI	8:00 am	1280	Bridgewater - CKBW	7:30 am	100C
Weyburn - CFSL	8:00 am	1190	Digby - CKDY	6:00 am	1420

MANITOBA

Altona - CFAM	9:30 am	950	Halifax - CFDR	8:30 am	780
Steinbach - CHSM	8:00 am	1250	Liverpool - CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Winnipeg - CKJS	9:00 am	810	Kentville - CKEN	8:30 am	1490

ONTARIO

Atikokan - CHAK	9:30 am	1240	Middleton - CKAD	8:30 am	1350
Chatham - CFCO	6:30 am	630	NewGlasgow - CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Fort Frances - CFOB	9:30 am	640	Shelburne - CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Guelph - CJOY	8:30 am	1460	Sydney - CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Hamilton - CHAM	7:30 am	820	Weymouth - CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
Kapuskasing - CKAP	7:00 am	586	Drayton Valley, AB - CIBW	8:30 am-Sunday	92.9fm
			Nordeg, AB - CHBW	8:30 am-Sunday	93.9fm
			Rocky Mtn. House, AB - CHBW	8:30 am-Sunday	94.5fm
			Prince Rupert, BC - CIAJ	10 am-Saturday	100.7fm
			Niagara Falls, ON - CJRN	7:30am-Sunday	710am



The Ambassadors
invite you to enjoy their
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Thursday, December 27 at 8:00 p.m.
Hope Christian Reformed Church
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Admission \$10 per person, \$25 per family

Friday, December 28 at 8:00 p.m.
First Christian Reformed Church
Hamilton (Charlton & Hess)
Freewill offering

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News

Canadian relief agencies agree on disaster response

Alan Doerkson

OTTAWA — Although Canada is not a country known for its disasters, they do happen — floods and ice-storms, for example. Recently, six Canadian non-profit relief agencies agreed to co-ordinate their efforts to help communities affected by a national emergency or disaster.

At a Nov. 15, 2001 meeting in Ottawa, members of the six agencies signed an agreement called *Guidelines for Co-operation*, which encourages them to assess local needs and co-operatively share the workload. The agencies are the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), St. John Ambulance, the Salvation Army, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), and the Canadian Red Cross.

"This agreement creates the basis for far more co-ordinated and effective service to disaster survivors," says Jacob Kramer, relief administrator for CRWRC. "It is a good testimony of Christian involvement and witness in the society around us."

More targeted approach

Kramer believes the agreement is important because, "in the case of an emergency in Canada, there is always a great deal of confusion [about] how can you be complementary to each other." With the agreement in place, it will now be much easier to phone other agencies and work together in a co-ordinated way, he asserts. "I think we will have a far more targeted approach from the beginning.... we can agree in a much shorter time" about which agency will do what work.

"The Ministry of Health and Social Services has been quite instrumental in pushing for this," says Kramer. He cited ice storms and flooding of Manitoba's Red River as recent Canadian emergencies where co-ordinated relief work was necessary.

Each of the six agencies has its own specific strengths and weaknesses, Kramer observes. CRWRC's specialty is rehabilitation and rebuilding of houses, he says.

Disaster Response Services (DRS) is a program of CRWRC, and was established in 1972 "to help survivors of disaster in North America solve their disaster-related problems and be restored to self-sufficiency as soon as possible," according to the *Guidelines for Co-operation*. In Canada and the U.S., CRWRC gives leadership to about 1,100 registered



PHOTOS COURTESY CRWRC

Signing the agreement were (from left): Robert Langdon (St. John Ambulance), K. Oliver Lofton-Brook (Adventist Development & Relief Agency), Johanne Bray (Canadian Red Cross Society), Jacob Kramer (Christian Reformed World Relief Committee), Gord Friesen (Mennonite Disaster Service), Lieut.-Colonel Robert Slous (Salvation Army)

volunteers who are trained in area and regional management of disaster intervention, needs assessment, site and construction management. Needs assessment involves trained and supervised volunteer teams conducting door-to-door surveys of long term recovery needs. The results become the property of the requesting community-based recovery organization as a computerized database.

Important to co-operate

Oliver Loftonbrook, executive director of ADRA, values the new agreement, and says, "We feel it's important we work together. In the past, groups haven't always."

Although the federal government helps with disaster relief efforts, "They need help from the private sector," observes Loftonbrook. "We're looking at going hand in hand with the government."

ADRA has been doing overseas relief work for years, but only for the past few years in Canada, explains Loftonbrook. If a Canadian disaster "involves more than 100 families, we get involved," he says. But for smaller emergencies, local Seventh Day Adventist churches take care of things.

ADRA is a Seventh-day Adventist organization established for the specific purpose of community development and disaster relief. Among the ser-

bers of local affiliates are urged to work with their sister agencies."

The Guidelines assure that each agency "will retain their unique identities and missions."

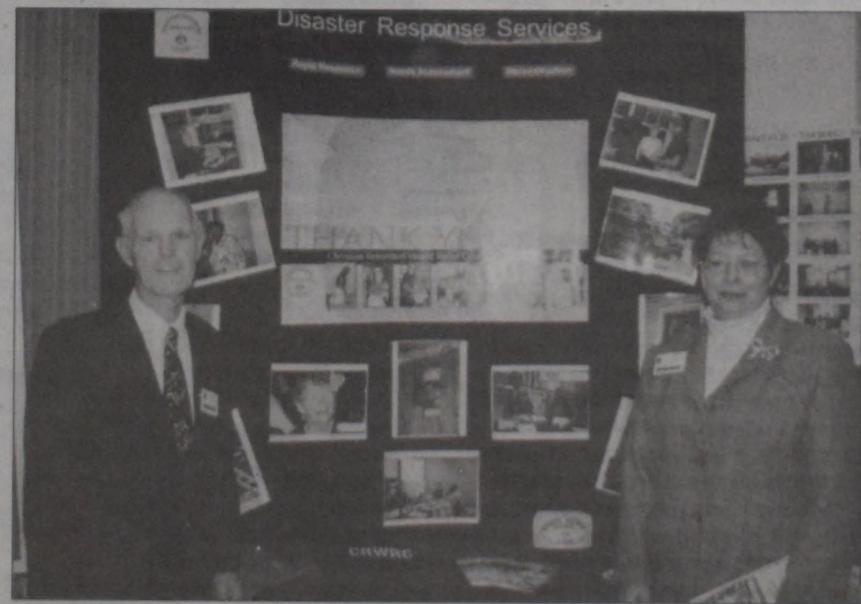
The six agencies have agreed on these two points:

"Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.... We affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions;

"In information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings — not objects of pity. While we will co-operate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximizing overall relief assistance.... We will encourage a team approach to media contacts."

One result of the agreement is that at the national level, "the directors responsible for emergency preparedness and response for each organization will meet and/or communicate with each other and with ... the federal government on a regular basis.... When major events occur which indicate the need for a joint response, the leadership of each organization will agree upon their respective roles and undertake to fulfill those commitments to the greatest extent possible. The nature of all interaction and references to the other agencies will be that of mutual respect and support."

By co-operating at the provincial, territorial, regional and community levels, the groups hope to minimize unproductive overlapping functions and roles.



Tony De Weerd, CRWRC's regional manager for Disaster Response Services (left) and Jennie De Weerd, area manager and Canadian liaison for DRS stand by CRWRC's display from the open house preceding the signing ceremony.

News Digest

Wolf-proof straw houses

RED DEER, Alta (Canadian Press) — A B.C. man is making a living building straw homes that would put the three little pigs to shame. Habib Gonzalez of Nelson, B.C., says his houses can withstand anything a big bad wolf or the weather can blow at them, while reducing energy costs.

Gonzalez's company, Sustainable Works, builds homes with walls made of bales of Alberta straw. The outside is stuccoed to look like a regular house.

Gonzalez says a straw home can save an owner up to 60 per cent on heating costs because of the straw's density. And according to Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corp. fire tests, straw is safer than wood.

Dutch domino champs

MAASTRICHT, the Netherlands (Ananova) — A Dutch team believes they have beaten China's record for toppling the most dominoes at once.

Last year, the Chinese toppled 3,407,535 dominoes but 3,540,562 fell in Maastricht in one and a half hours.

Ninety people of various nationalities spent more than two months creating 75 designs with dominoes.

Among the designs were a western village, the Colosseum, and the tulip fields of the Netherlands.

Organizer Robin Paul Weijers told the *Haagse Courant* newspaper: "It's thrilling." Pictures of the feat were broadcast in 10 countries.

Car smashing therapy

BERLIN, Germany (Reuters) — A Berlin car recycling centre has come up with a novel way to win customers and reduce the public's need for therapists: car smashing.

Andreas Schmidtke, managing director at the Autopresse Tempelhof, said for \$2 customers can swipe at junk cars with a sledge hammer for up to an hour. He said most had left with a smile after just 10 minutes of destruction.

"It's a form of stress relief for people who might otherwise be in need of a therapist," Schmidtke said. "They let out their frustration on the car wrecks before we put them in the press. The people who've tried it out so far seem satisfied. They leave here feeling better."